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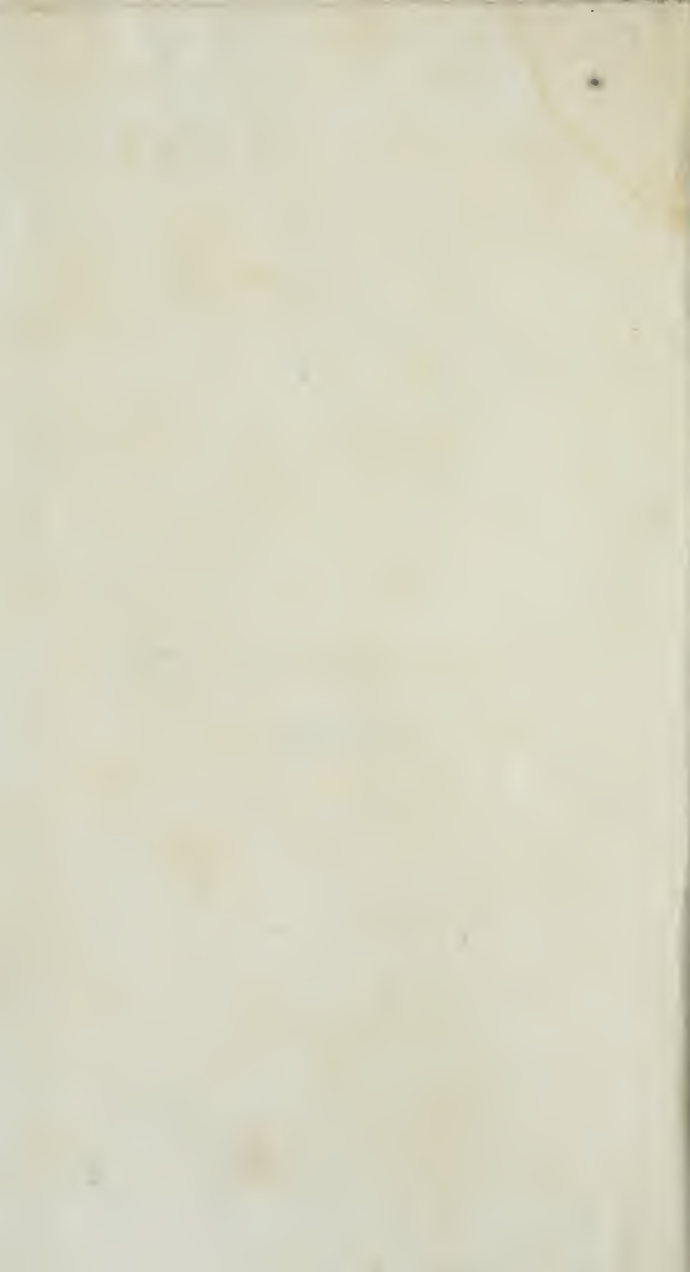
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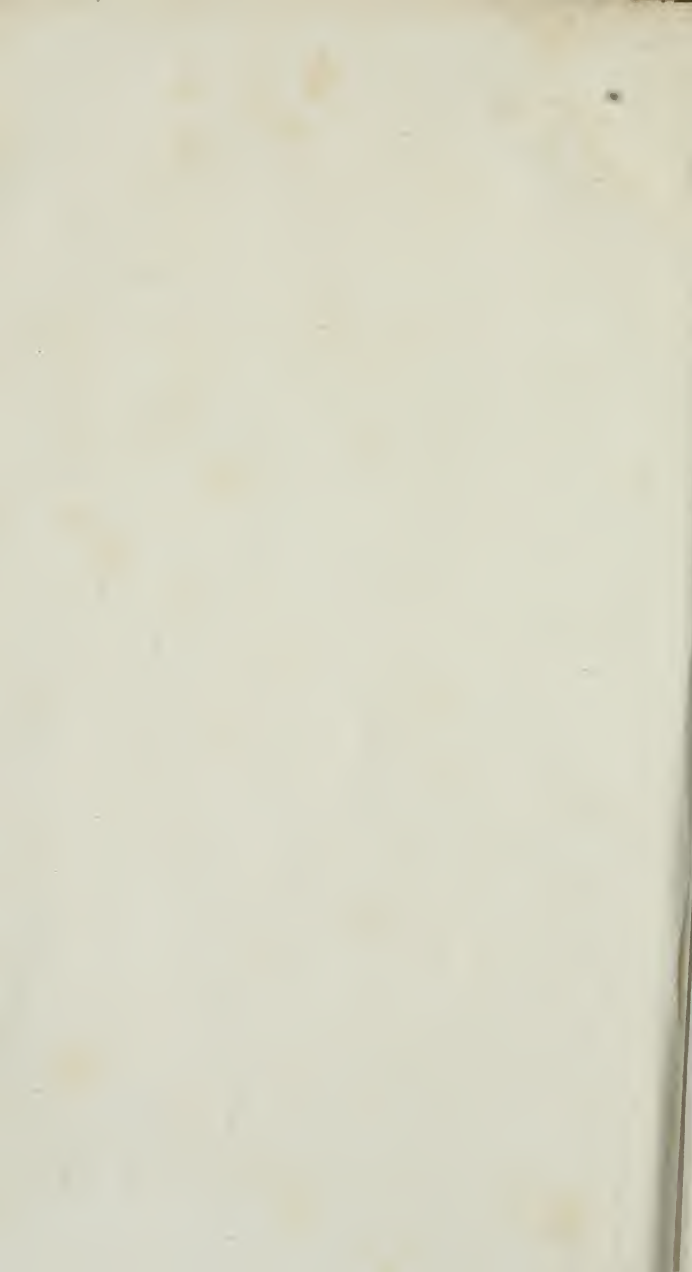
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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### CABINET OF AMERICAN HISTORY.

The author of the following volumes proposes to publish under this comprehensive title, a full and particular history of America, divided into parts, each of which will have an integral form, but making together a continuous whole. Each portion will contain a popular description of the geology, climate, and productions, with the civil history of the country to which it relates.

Four volumes have now been published on this plan. The two first embraces the discoveries of Columbus and his cotemporaries, in America, prior to the year 1520, at which period the three great portions of America were made known to Europe; the two last comprise the ancient history of Mexico, with the interesting and extraordinary story of its conquest. A fifth volume, now in preparation, and speedily to be published, will contain the History of Modern Mexico, under Spanish administration, with an account of its struggle for Independence, and of the vicissitudes which the republic has undergone.

In prosecution of the subject, existing political divisions will be pursued; but a succinct history of the changes in the dominion of each will be given; and, where due regard for unity in the narrative does not forbid, the chronological order will be preserved. Thus, it is proposed to treat Peru, Chili, Central America, Bolivia, the United Provinces of La Plata, Brazil, the States of Columbia, the Independent Nations of South America, Russian, British, Spanish, French, Danish and Dutch America, and the United States of North America.

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

Under the last division, a separate volume will be appropriated to each State, whose story may require it.

A survey having been thus made of the whole Western Hemisphere, the concluding part of the work will contain the History of the Indian races, particularly those of the Northern continent; with a critical examination of the theories relating to the original peopling of America.

*The following recommendations have been selected from many favourable notices of the first volumes of this work.*

We have had on our table for some days, two new volumes, that are specially entitled to public notice; we refer to volumes first and second of the History of America, which has been undertaken by Thomas F. Gordon, Esq. of this City. This gentleman is advantageously known by a History of Pennsylvania, and will not suffer in reputation by the present account of the Spanish Discoveries, prior to 1520. Mr. Gordon writes rapidly and well, he is an indefatigable enquirer; he will be impartial and faithful to his enterprize.

*National Gazette.*

Mr. Gordon's plan is extensive; and the portion of it embraced in the above volumes, appears to be very well executed. The work is an important and interesting one, and the labours of Mr. Gordon deserve ample encouragement, from our reading public.

*Craftsman.*

The work is interesting, and calculated to become a valuable acquisition to our libraries.

*Portland Evening Advertiser.*

A work of this character compiled with a scrupulous regard to facts, as doubtless this will be, requires no recommendatory notice. Its usefulness is written in its title page; and the increasing desire for historical knowledge, is a guarantee that the perusal of these volumes will be as extensive and general as the knowledge of their existence.

*National Journal.*

The present design is very comprehensive, and will embrace every material historical period, and describe each part of the continent, according to the extent of the subject. The volumes just published narrate the history of its discovery.—This part of the subject is full of curious adventure, and entertaining general description. The style is neat and clear. The arrangement of the work is such, that the successive volumes, though forming a comprehensive whole, are complete in themselves, and may, therefore, be selected from the rest, according to the taste of the reader or purchaser.

The publication of this series of volumes, by Carey and Lea, is one of the most important literary undertakings that has been yet attempted, among the various "Libraries," now in course of publication in England or this country.

The volumes before us, relate entirely to the early Spanish discoveries, and pass creditably over the same ground, that has lately been so gracefully trodden by the elegant author of the Sketch Book. They appear to embrace a greater quantity of information relating to those regions, within a small compass, than any work upon the subject we have met with, and are written in a neat and unaffected style.

*New York American.*



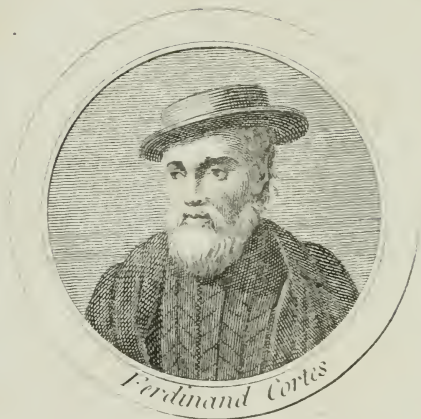
**CABINET**  
**OF**  
**AMERICAN HISTORY.**

**VOL. III.**

**MEXICO.**







THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
ANCIENT MEXICO;

FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THAT EMPIRE TO ITS DESTRUCTION  
BY THE SPANIARDS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

THOMAS F. GORDON.

*C. G. Gordon*

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'Tis strange, but true; for Truth is always strange,  
Stranger than fiction.

Byron. Don Juan, Canto xv.

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VOLUME I.

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PHILADELPHIA:

*Printed for and Published by the Author:  
And for Sale by the principal Booksellers in the U. States.*

.....  
1832.

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Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1832,  
by THOMAS F. GORDON, in the Clerk's Office of the District  
Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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T. TOWN'S, STEREOTYPE. }  
PHILADELPHIA. }

## P R E F A C E

So much of the following volumes as relates to the ancient history of Mexico, will prove new to most readers of this country. For, although a translation of the work of the Abbé Clavigero, from which the matter is chiefly drawn, was published in London in 1787, and republished in Philadelphia, some twenty years since, it was in form and volume, too large for popular use, and is consequently to be found only in our larger public libraries. To the work of Dr. Robertson, the public owes almost all its knowledge of the very interesting country of which we now treat; but, that work, as we have in our preceding volume remarked, abounds in misrepresentations, is very defective in detail, and labours to cast doubts on the power, civilization and arts of the Mexican States. Indeed, one of the principal inducements of Clavigero for undertaking his history, was to correct the errors and supply the omissions of the celebrated English historian.

As we have made the labours of the Abbé the basis of our own, it will be proper to notice the claims which the first have to credit and respect. The Abbé D. Francisco Saverio Clavigero was born in Vera Cruz, and resided nearly forty years in the kingdom of New Spain. He was intimately acquainted with the language of the Mexicans, and other nations of Anahuac, through which, he was enabled to study, advantageously, their traditions, their historical paintings and other monuments of antiquity. To these advantages, he added much general learning, great liberality of sentiment, and a familiar acquaintance with every author on America who had preceded him. His zeal was ardent:

and if it sometimes led him into intemperate expressions when reviewing the works of those who had maligned his country, the patriotism that prompted him must serve to redeem the fault. His work is written with great care and accuracy; and an earnest desire to paint truly, all that he describes, pervades it. He has brought together all the scattered rays of light, visible at the period in which he wrote, and has given the most minute and comprehensive account of the manners, customs, religion, policy, literature and antiquities of his ancient countrymen. He wrote, too, as an American, freed from that influence which makes the Spanish writers, generally, the slavish panegyrists of their kings and their heroes. As his work revealed many things, of which Europe and the learned world were generally ignorant, and particularly as he found it necessary to contradict and expose the statements of several distinguished writers, he published a catalogue *raisonné* of the authors on whom he relied, from which, we have taken for the Appendix of our fourth volume, a copious extract.

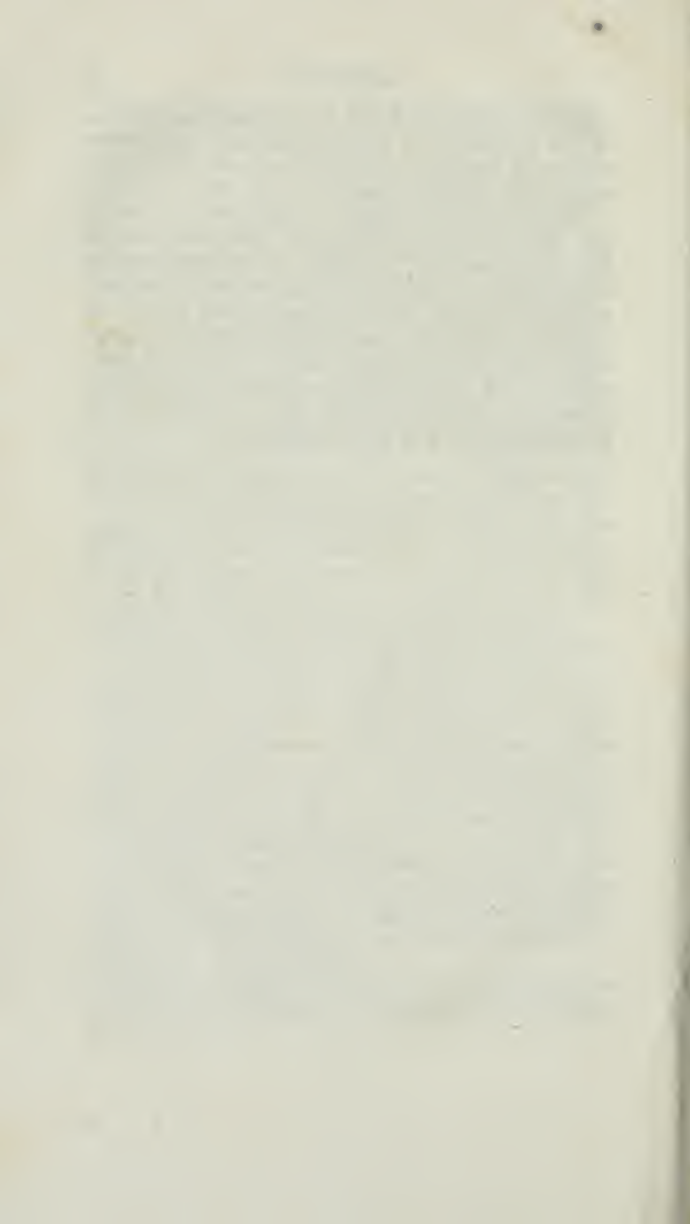
Although we have relied with full confidence on the work of the Abbé, we have not neglected to examine such of the authorities he has cited, as were accessible to us; and from a comparison of his statements with those of Acosta, Garcia, Bernal Diaz, Herrera, and other writers, we feel assured that he justly merits the praise he most coveted, that of strict fidelity. We have extracted from his history, we believe, all the important facts connected with our subject, and we have thrown such additional light upon them as later writers could afford; especially such as might be derived from the Geographical, Historical, and Archæological illustrations of M. de Humboldt.

We have embellished our work with twenty-four engraved pages which will give to the reader more



satisfactory ideas of the curious animals and plants, of the temples, arts, forms, costumes, and picture writing of Anahuac than could be conveyed by any other mode of description.

The succeeding volume, which will be speedily put to press, will contain the history of Modern Mexico, through all its changes to the present period; including an account, of the Spanish civil and commercial polity, of the discovery and product of the mines, and of the progress of revolutionary principles and events; together with a view of the agricultural and mercantile capabilities of a country, which it is supposed, may become at no distant day an important rival of the United States.



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# HISTORY OF MEXICO.

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## CHAPTER I.

- I. *Geographical description of ancient Mexico.*  
1. *General limits, name.* 2. *Chief divisions.*  
3. *Description of the Kingdom of Michuacan.* 4. *Of Tlacopan.* 5. *Of Acolhuacan.* 6. *Of Tlascala.* 7. *Of Mexico proper, Inland provinces, Maritime provinces.....* II. *General view of the countries included in the Vice Royalty of New Spain.* 1. *Plateau of New Spain.* 2. *Range of the Cordillera.* 3. *Height of the principal mountains.* 4. *Geological structure of the Cordillera of New Spain.* 5. *Volcanoes.* 6. *Minerals.* 7. *Rivers and Lakes.* 8. *Sea Coasts....* III. *Climates of New Spain.* 1. *Tierras Calientes, or Hot Zone.* 2. *Tierras Templadas, or Temperate Zone.* 3. *Tierras Frias, or Frigid Zone.* 4. *Seasons.*

I. 1. The Mexican Empire, in its greatest extent, immediately preceding the Spanish conquest, stretched westward from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, and from the 14° to the 21° of northern latitudes. This extensive tract was called by the natives *Anahuac*; a name originally given to the Vale of Mexico, only, because its principal cities were situated on small islands and on the borders of lakes;

the word *Anahuac*, signifying *near to the water*; and thence was derived the name *Anahuatlaca* or *Nahuatlaca*, by which the semi-civilized nations occupying the banks of the Mexican lake have been known.

2. This vast country was then divided, into the kingdoms of *Mexico*, *Acolhuacan*, *Tlacopan*, and *Michuacan*; the republics of *Tlaxcallan*, *Cholollan* and *Huexotzinco*, and several other distinct but inferior states.

3. The Kingdom of Michuacan, the westernmost division, was bounded on the east and south, by Mexico, on the north, by the country of the Chichimecas, and other barbarous nations, and on the west, by lake Chapallan, some independent states, and the Pacific. The country was pleasant, rich and populous; and possessed several considerable cities; the capital *Tzintzuntzan*, called by the Mexicans *Huitzitzilla* which was situated on the eastern shore of the beautiful lake; *Pazcuaro*, *Tiripitio*, *Zacapu*, and *Tarecuato*.

4. The kingdom of *Tlacopan* situated between Mexico and Michuacan, was of small extent, comprehending a few cities of the Tepaneca nation, and the villages of the Mazahui, on the mountains west of the Vale of Mexico. The capital, which gave its name to the kingdom, lay on the western border of the lake of Tezcuco, four miles west from that of Mexico.

5. The kingdom of Acolhuacan the most ancient, and at one time, the most extensive of the Mexican states, was bounded on the east by the republic of Tlaxcallan; on the south by the province of Chalco belonging to Mexico; on the north by the country of the Huastecas; and on the west by Mexico and the lake Tezcuco. Its length, from south to north, was little more than two hundred miles, and its greatest breadth did not exceed sixty. It was

studded with large cities and covered by a numerous population. Its capital Tezcucó, on the eastern bank of the lake, fifteen miles east of that of Mexico, was justly celebrated, not less for its antiquity and grandeur, than for the polish and civilization of its inhabitants. The cities of *Huexotla*, *Coatlíchan* and *Atenco* were so nearly adjacent, that they appeared like its suburbs: *Otompan*, *Acolman* and *Tepepolco*, were also considerable cities of this kingdom.\*

6. The celebrated republic of Tlaxcallan or Tlascala was bounded on the west by the kingdom of Acolhuacan, on the south by the republics Cholollan and Huexotzinco, and by the state of Tepejacac, belonging to the crown of Mexico, whose provinces also covered it on the north and east. Its length did not reach fifty miles, nor its breadth more than thirty. The chief city Tlascala was built on the side of the great mountain *Mattalcueye*, about seventy miles eastward of the city of Mexico.

7. The kingdom of Mexico, although the most modern, was far greater than all the other mentioned states taken together. It extended on the south and south-west to the Pacific Ocean; towards the south-east to Guatemala; on the east to the gulph of Mexico, on the west to the dominions of Tlacopan and Michuacan; and on the north and north-west to the country of the Huastecas and the barbarous Chichemecas.†

\* The Spaniards have altered the Mexican names and adapted them to their own language, saying, Tacuba, Oculma, Otumaba, Guaxata, Tepeaca, Guatamala, Churabusco, &c. in place of Tlacopan, Acolman, Otompan, Huexotla, Tepejacac, Quauhquemallan, and Huitzilopochco, for the purpose of facilitating the pronunciation.

† De Solís, and other Spanish, French and English writers, give a greater extent to the kingdom of Mexico. Dr. Robertson says that the territories of Tezcucó, and Tacuba, were scarce inferior to those of Mexico proper: but his statement in this respect, is according to Clavigero, erroneous.

Of this extensive country, the Vale of Mexico, girded by beautiful and verdant mountains, whose circumference, at the base, exceeded one hundred and twenty miles, was the most fruitful and populous district. A part of the vale is covered by two lakes, in circumference 90 miles, divided by the peninsula *Itztapalapan*, but, which communicate with each other by a canal; the upper one called *Chalco* of sweet, and the lower one, *Texcuco*, of brackish water. In the latter, the city of Mexico, the most renowned of the new world, was, like Venice, built on several small islands, in  $19^{\circ} 25' 45''$  north latitude, and  $101^{\circ} 25' 30''$ \* west longitude from Paris. Next to the royal cities of Mexico, Acolhuacan and Tlacopan, *Xochomilco*, *Chalco*, *Itztapalapan* and *Quauhtitlan*, were most distinguished. Beside these, there were forty eminent towns, and many villages and hamlets in this delightful vale. The sites of all these cities are yet discoverable, but many of them are in ruins, and none retain a twentieth part of their former greatness.

The inland provinces dependent on this great kingdom were those of the Otomies on the north; the *Tlahuicas* and the *Cohuixcas* on the south; *Itzocan*, *Jauhtepec*, *Quauhquechollan*, *Atlixco*, *Tehuacan*, *Mixtecas*, *Zapotecas*, and *Chiapanecas* on the south-east; *Tepejacac*, *Popolocas* and *Totonacas* on the east.

The maritime provinces were *Coatzacualco* and *Cuetlachtlan*, called by the Spaniards *Cotasta*, on the Mexican gulph; *Coliman*, *Zacatollan*, *Toto-tepec*, *Tecuan-tepec* and *Xoconocho* on the Pacific Ocean.

The province of the Otomies commenced in the northern part of the Vale of Mexico, and extended

\* According to M. De Humboldt.

northward, through the mountains, a distance of ninety miles from its capital. *Tollan* now *Tula*, and *Xilotepec* become its metropolis since the Spanish conquest, were its chief cities. Between the northern settlements of this nation and new Mexico, the country, more than a thousand miles in extent, was occupied by barbarous Nomades, who acknowledged no sovereign.

The province of *Matlatzincas*, comprehending the valley of *Tolocalan*, stretched thence to *Tlaximaloyan*, (now *Taximaroa*,) the frontier of the kingdom of Michuacan. The fertile valley of *Tolocalan* is forty miles long, and thirty in breadth, where it is broadest. The city of the same name, the chief town of the province, is situated at the foot of a high mountain perpetually covered with snow, thirty miles distant from Mexico. The other portions of the valley were inhabited, partly, by the *Matlatzincas*, and partly, by the *Otomies*. In the neighbouring mountains, were the states of *Xalatlahuico*, *Tzompahuacan* and *Malinalco*; at a short distance to the eastward of the valley the state of *Ocuillan*, and to the westward, those of *Tozantla* and *Zoltepec*.

The *Cuitlatecas* inhabited a country which extended more than two hundred miles, from the north-west to the south-east, from the kingdom of Michuacan to the Pacific Ocean. Their capital, *Mexcaltepec* upon the coast, was a large and populous city, whose ruins, are now scarcely visible.

The province of *Tlahuicas* commenced at the southern mountains of the Mexican vale, and extended southward sixty miles. Its chief town *Quauhnahuac*, (now *Cuernabaca*,) is forty miles from Mexico.

The great district of *Cohuixcas*, was bounded northward by the *Matlatzincas* and *Tlahuicas*; westward by *Cuitlatecas*; eastward by *Jopi* and *Mixtecas*, and southward by the Pacific Ocean, in-



cluding that part of the coast on which the port and city of Acapulco now lie. It comprehended the several states of *Tzompanco*, *Chilapan*, *Tlapan* and *Teoitzitla*. *Tlacho*, celebrated for its silver mines, lay on its borders.

*Mixtecapan* reached, from *Acatlan* distant 120 miles south-east of Mexico, to the Pacific; and contained several populous and commercial towns. Eastward lay the country of the *Zapotecas*, so called from their capital *Teotzapotlan*; in which was the valley of *Huaxyacac*, pronounced by the Spaniards *Oaxaca* or *Guaxaca*. The city of the same name, was after the conquest, constituted a bishopric and, the valley a marquisate in favour of the conqueror Cortes.

Northward of the Mixtecas was the province of *Mazatlan*: And to the northward and eastward of the Zapoteca was *Chinantla*, with their capitals of the same names; whence their inhabitants were called *Mazatecas* and *Chinantecas*. The provinces of the *Chiapanecas*, *Toqui* and *Queleni*, were the last of the Mexican empire, towards the south-east. The principal cities of the Chiapanecas were *Tochiapan*, (called by the Spaniards *Chiapa de Indios*) *Tochtla*, *Chamolla* and *Tziuacantla*; of the *Zoqui*, *Tecpantla*; and of the *Quelini*, *Teopixca*. Upon the side and around the famous mountain *Popocatepec* which is thirty-three miles distant south-east from Mexico, were the great states *Amaquemecan*, *Tepotzlan*, *Jauhtepec*, *Huaxtepec*, *Chietlan*, *Itzocan*, *Acapetlayocan*, *Quauhquechollan*, *Atlixco*, *Cholollan* and *Huexotzinco*. The two last were the most considerable; and having by the assistance of their neighbours the Tlascalans shaken off the Mexican yoke, they re-established their former government, which was aristocratical. *Cholollan*, or *Cholula* and *Huexotzinco*, were the largest and most populous cities of all that country. The Cho-

lulans possessed a small hamlet called *Cuitlaxcoapan*, in the place, where, afterwards, the Spaniards founded the city of Angelopoli, which is the second of new Spain.\*

On the east of Cholula were the states of Tepejacac, and Popolocas whose principal cities were *Tecamachalco*, and *Quecholac*. Southward of the Popolocas lay the district of Tehuacan, bordering on the country of the Mixtecas; eastward the maritime province of *Cuetlachtlan*; and northward the *Totonacas*. This great province, the last in that part of the empire, extended an hundred and fifty miles, from the frontier of *Zacatlan*, a dependency of Mexico, about eighty miles from the coast, to the gulph of Mexico. Besides the capital *Mizquihuacan*, it possessed the beautiful city of *Chempollan* upon the coast of the gulph, which was the first city of the empire entered by the Spaniards.

Of the provinces on the Pacific Ocean, the northernmost was *Coliman*, whose capital of the same name lay in 19° north latitude. Next, southward in successive order, were Zacatolan, with its capital also so called; Cuitlatecas and Coahuixcas; in the last of which was the port of Acapulco, celebrated in latter times for its commerce with the Phillipine islands; *Jopi*; Mixtecas, at present *Xicayan*; *Tecuanatepec*; and lastly *Xoconochco*. The city of Tecuanatepec, from which the state derived its name was situated on a beautiful little island, formed by a river, two miles from the sea. The province of Xoconochco, the most southerly of the empire was bounded on the east and south-east by the country of Xochitepec, which did not belong to the crown of Mexico; on the west by that of Tecuanatepec; and on the south by the ocean; on which, lay Xo-

\* The Spaniards say Tustla, Mecamecca, Izucar, Atrisco, and Quechula, in the place of Tochlan, Amaquemecan, Itzocan, Atlitxco and Quecholac.

conochco its metropolis, situated between two rivers in the 14° of northern latitude.

The province of Totonacas extended to the gulph of Mexico; south of which were *Cuetlactlan* and *Coatzacualco*; the last was bounded on the east by the vast country of *Onohualco*, under which name the Mexicans comprehended the states of Tabasco and the peninsula of Yucatan, which were not subject to their dominion. Besides the capital, also called Coatzacualco, there were other peopled places, among which *Painalla* was remarkable, as the birth place of the famous Malintzin, or Maria, the mistress and interpreter of Cortes, one of the most powerful instruments in the conquest of Mexico. The province of Cuetlactlan, which had a capital of the same name, included the coast between the rivers Alvarado and Antigua. On that part of it, called by the natives *Chalchicuecan* lie the port and city of Vera Cruz, the most renowned in new Spain.

Solis has stated erroneously that the empire of Montezuma extended from Panama to new California; but according to Clavigero and M. de Humboldt, his kingdom was bounded towards the eastern coast by the river of Guasacula and Tuspan, and towards the western coast by the plains of Xoconusco and the port of Zacatula. Thus including only the Spanish intendencies of Vera Cruz, Oaxaca, La Puebla, Mexico and Valadolid.

II. 1. In the foregoing description we have confined ourselves to those countries which formed a part of, or were adjacent to, the empire of Mexico at the period of the conquest. Perspicuity requires that our geographical notices should be extended to other districts which have since been included under the Viceroyalty of new Spain. Of this extensive surface, two thirds are situated under the temperate, and the remainder under the torrid zone.



Nevertheless, from various causes, three fifths of the portion under the torrid zone enjoy a cold, or moderate temperature. The whole interior of the Viceroyalty of Mexico, especially of the countries formerly denominated Anahuac, and Mechuacan, and probably the whole of new Biscay forms one immense elevated plateau; from 6500 to 8200 feet above the level of the neighbouring seas; while in Europe, the elevated lands which have the appearance of plains, such as the plateaux of Auvergne, Switzerland and Spain, do not rise higher than from 1300 to 2600 feet above the ocean.\*

The chain of mountains forming the plateau of Mexico is the same which under the name of the Andes traverses the whole of southern America. When examined, nevertheless, in a physico-geographical view, it differs much on the north and south of the equator. In the southern hemisphere the Cordillera is every where cleft by crevices void of heterogenous substances. The elevated plains, as in the kingdom of Quito, and the parish of Pastos, must be considered as high longitudinal valleys bounded by two branches of the great Cordillera of the Andes. In Mexico, the ridge of the mountains itself constitutes the plateau. In Peru the most elevated summits form the crest of the Andes; whilst in Mexico such peaks become less colossal in their dimensions, yet rising to sixteen or seventeen thousand feet, are scattered over the plateau arranged in lines, which have no parallelism with the general direction of the Cordillera. Peru and new Granada contain transverse valleys, whose depth sometimes of 4800 feet, prevent travelling in any other manner than on horseback, or on foot; but in new Spain, carriages roll without obstruction

\* Humboldt's New Spain, 1. book 1.c.3. Malte Brun. Geog. book 83.

from the city of Mexico, to Santa Fe, a distance of five hundred leagues.\*

The table land of Mexico is in general so little interrupted by valleys, and has a declivity so gentle, that as far as the city of Durango, in new Biscay, 140 leagues from Mexico, the surface is continually elevated from 5570 to 8850 feet above the level of the ocean. This is equal to the height of Mount Cenis, St. Gothard, or the Great St. Bernard; and the length of this plain comprehended between latitudes  $18^{\circ}$  and  $40^{\circ}$  is equal to the meridional distance of Lyons from the tropic of Cancer, which crosses the great desert of Africa. It declines towards the north, contrary to the direction of the rivers. This extraordinary fact might be deemed incredible, were it not established by the observation of the learned and accurate Humboldt.† We must take for granted therefore, that the mountains to the north of Santa Fe, rise abruptly to form the elevated ridges and table land, from which the Missouri and its tributary streams descend.‡

Of the four plateaux which surround the capital of Mexico, the first, comprehending the valley of Toluca, is 8530 feet in height; the second, or the valley of Tenochtitlan, is 7460 feet; the third, or the valley of Actopan, 6553 feet; and the fourth, or the valley of Iztla 3343 feet. These basins differ as much from each other in climate, as in elevation; and each is adapted to a different species of cultivation; the last producing the sugar cane; the third, cotton; the second, wheat; and the first, plantations of the Agaves, which may be considered the vineyards of the Aztec Indians.§

This configuration of the surface singularly fa-

\* Humboldt, N. S. book 1. c. 3. Malte Brun Geog. book 83.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

vours the conveyance of merchandize by roads and canals; but opposes great difficulties to the communication between the interior and the coast; the former, rising from the sea in the form of a rampart, everywhere presents an enormous difference of level, and of temperature. The southern declivity, more especially, is rapid, and of difficult access. We travel from the capital towards Vera Cruz, sixty nautical leagues before we meet with a valley whose bottom is lower than 3281 feet above the level of the sea; from this point the remainder of the road is a continued and painful descent. The Asiatic road differs, much from the European. On our way to Acapulco on the South Sea, we reach the temperate regions in less than seventeen leagues, and for the space of seventy-two leagues, the distance in a straight line from Mexico to that port, we continually ascend and descend, and as often change a cold for an excessively hot climate.\*

2. The Cordillera of the Andes which traverses the Isthmus of Darien, at one time approaches the Pacific Ocean, at another, the coasts of the gulph of Mexico. In Guatimala its crests, bristling with volcanic cones, stretch along the western coast from the lake of Nicaragua to the bay of Tehuantepec; but in the province of Oaxaca, between the sources of the rivers Chimalapa, and Quaternalco, it occupies the centre of the Mexican Isthmus. Between the  $18\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  and  $21^{\circ}$  of latitude in the former intendencies of La Puebla and Mexico, from Mixteca to the mines of Zimapan, it runs south and north, and approaches the eastern coast.

3. In this part of the great plain of Anahuac, between the capital of Mexico and the small towns of Xalappa and Cordova, a group of mountains appears, which rivals the most elevated summits of

\* Humboldt, N. S. book 1. c. 3.

the new Continent. Four of the principal ones have been measured by Baron Humboldt. *Popocatepetl*, or smoking mountain, called by the Spaniards, the great volcano, is 17.968 feet in height; the *Iztaccihuatl*, the white woman, or the *Sierra Nevada* is 16.000 feet; the *Citlaltepeltl*, or Starry mountain otherwise called the *Peak of Orizaba*, is 17.697 feet; and the *Nauhcampatepetl* or *Coffre de Perote* is 13.633 feet.\*

Northward of the 19th parallel, near the celebrated mines of *Zimapan* and *Doctor* in the late intendency of Mexico, the Cordillera takes the Spanish name of *Sierra Madre* and the Mexican *Tepe-Suene*. Thence it tends north-west, towards the towns of *San Miguel-el-Grande* and *Guanaxuato*. North of the last, considered the Potosi of Mexico, it expands to an extraordinary breadth; and divides itself into three branches. The easternmost one proceeds towards Charcas and Real de Catorce to lose itself in the late kingdom of Leon. The western branch occupies a part of Guadalajara; sinking rapidly from *Bolanos* and extending itself by Culiacan and Arispe into the intendency of Sonora, as far as the borders of the Rio-Gila. Under the 30° of latitude it rises again in Tarahumara, near the gulph of California, where it forms the mountains of Primeria Alta, celebrated for their extensive washes of gold. The third

\* Humboldt N. S. book 1. c. 3. Malte Brun Geog. book 83.

Humboldt, gives his measurements in metres and toises. Malte Brun relies on his authority, but varies from him much. And the English translators of these authors, differ considerably in the reductions of the French to the English measure. Mr. Poinsett, (notes on Mexico, p. 24.) gives the height of the Coffre de Perote at 7719 feet above the ocean. This must be an error, probably of the press, for we have seen, that according to Humboldt, the table land on which it rests, is at least 5570 feet above the sea. Captain Bonnycastle states the height of this mountain at 13.514 feet, and the city of Mexico at 7470 feet,

branch which is the central chain of the Mexican Andes, covers the whole extent of the late intendency of Zacatecas; and may be traced through Durango and Parral in new Biscay, as far as the *Sierra de los Mimbres* to the west of Rio-Grande del Norte; thence it traverses new Mexico and joins the mountains *Las Gruellas* and the *Sierra Verde*.

4. The Granite which forms, in this Cordillera as every where else, the lowest stratum, appears at the surface in the little chain that borders the Pacific Ocean, and which on the side of *Acapulco*, is separated from the mass of high country by the valley of Peligrino. The beautiful port of *Acapulco* is excavated by the hand of nature from granite rocks. The same rock forms the mountains of Mixteca and of Zapateca in Oaxaca. The central plateau of Anahuac appears like an enormous dike of porphyritic rocks, which contain immense deposits of gold and silver. Basalt, amygdaloid, trap, gypsum and primitive limestone, form the predominant rocks. The strata succeed each other in the same order as in Europe, except, that syenite alternates with serpentine. The secondary rocks also resemble those of European countries; but hitherto no considerable beds of rock salt or coal have been discovered in the plateau of Mexico; while these substances, especially the former, appear in great abundance to the north of the gulph of California near the Lake *Timpanogos*.\*

The porphyry of the *Sierra de Santa Rosa* appears in gigantic masses which assume extraordinary shapes, like ruined walls and bastions. The masses that seem to have been thus hewn with the pick-axe and elevated 1000 or 1300 feet, are called in the country *buffa*. Enormous balls, con-

\* Humboldt Mex. B. 2. p. 134. Malte Brun's Geog. lib. 83.



tained in concentric beds, rest on isolated rocks. These porphyries give the environs of the town of *Guanaxuato* a singularly romantic aspect. The porphyritic rock of Mamancheta, known in the country by the name of *Los Organos de Actopan*, rises to view in the horizon like an old tower, of which the shattered base has become narrower than the summit. The porphyritic traps in columns, which terminate the mountains of *Jacal* and *Oyamel*, are crowned with pine and oak trees which add picturesque gracefulness to this imposing sight. From these mountains the ancient Mexicans obtained the *Itzli* or Obsidian, of which they formed their edged instruments.\*

The *Coffe de Perote* is a porphyritic mountain, elevated 13.633 feet above the level of the sea, and represents an ancient sarcophagus surmounted by a pyramid at one of its extremities. The basalts of La Regla, of which the prismatic columns an hundred feet high, have their central parts harder than the rest, form the native decorations of a beautiful cascade.†

5. The inhabitants of Mexico scarce look upon volcanoes as curiosities; they are so familiar with the effects of these colossal furnaces. Almost all the summits of the American Cordilleras contain craters. That of Mount Popocatepetl is said to be half a league in circumference, but at present is inaccessible. The Orizaba is also a volcano, from which

\* Humboldt's Researches, Malte Brun lib. 83.

The Itzli is known in South America, under the name of *Pietra del Galinazzo*. It is asserted by M. M. Caylus, and Bomare to be the obsidiana, of which the ancients made their *vasi murini* which were much esteemed. This stone is thus described by M. Clavigero, Hist. Mex. book 1. "It is semi-transparent of a glossy substance and generally black; but it is found, also white and blue. The Mexicans formed it into mirrors, knives, lancets, and spears."

† Humboldt's Views, &c.

in 1545 an irruption took place, after which the mountain continued burning for twenty years. It has received from the Indians the name of the Starry Mountain, on account of the luminous exhalations which rise from its crater and play around the summit covered with eternal snows. The sides of these colossal cones adorned with magnificent forests of cedar and pine are no longer overwhelmed by eruptions, nor furrowed with torrents of burning lava. Nor do currents of lava, properly so called, abound in Mexico. Nevertheless on the 14th of September 1759, the plain of Jorulla, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, was the scene of one of the most tremendous explosions ever witnessed on the face of the globe.\* In a single night, a volcano of 1494 feet in height, rose from the plain, surrounded by more than 2000 apertures, which continue to emit smoke at the present day. Messrs. Humboldt and Bonpland descended into the burning crater of the great volcano, not less than 258 feet in perpendicular depth, leaping over crevices which exhaled sulphuretted hydrogen in a state of inflammation. After many dangers, on account of the fragility of the basaltic and syenitic lava, they reached almost the bottom of the crater, where the air was in an extraordinary degree surcharged with carbonic acid.†

\* Malte Brun Geo. lib. 83. 1. Humboldt N. S. lib. 1. c. 3.

† The variation of the most respectable authors in dates and facts, is always perplexing and frequently provoking. Clavigero says, that the eruption of Juruyo, (Jorulla,) was on the 29th of September, 1760, and that previous to that day the site of the present mountain was a small hill, on which was a sugar plantation. On that day the volcano burst forth with furious shocks, overwhelming the sugar work and the neighbouring village of Guacana, and has since continued to emit fire and burning rocks, which have formed themselves into three mountains, whose circumference was nearly six miles in 1766, according to the account communicated to him by Don Emanuel de Bustamente, governor of the province, who was an eye witness of the fact.

The granite mountains of Oaxaca do not contain any known volcano; but more to the south, the city of Guatemala was for a long time kept in constant alarm by two neighbouring mountains, one vomiting fire, and the other water, and was finally overwhelmed by an irruption accompanied by an earthquake on the 7th of June 1773.\*

The volcanoes continue as far as Nicaragua. Near this city is that of Momantombo. The *Ómo Tepetl* shoots up its burning peak from the bosom of the lake of Nicaragua. Other volcanic mountains border the gulphs of the Pacific Ocean. The province of *Costa Rica* likewise contains volcanoes; and among others, that of Varu situated in the chain called Boruca.†

6. The mountains of Anahuac abound in ores of every kind of metal, and an infinite variety of other fossils. The Mexicans found gold in the countries of the Coahuixcas, the Mixtecas, the Zapotecas and in several others. They gathered this precious metal chiefly in grains, among the sand of the rivers; and they paid a tributary portion of their acquisitions to the crown; silver was dug from the mines of Tlacho, Tzompanco, and others; but was not so much prized by them, as by other nations. Since the conquest numerous silver mines have been discovered by the Spaniards; and they obtained, commonly, before the mining labours were interrupted by the late revolutions, an annual product of gold and silver, valued at twenty-two millions of

The ashes at the eruption, were forced as far as the city of Queretaro, one hundred and fifty miles distant from Juruyo; a matter almost incredible, but public and notorious in that city. In the city of Valladolid, sixty miles distant, it rained ashes in such abundance, that the inhabitants were obliged to sweep the yards of the houses two or three times during the day. History of Mexico, lib. 1. note.

\* Clavigero, says 29th July, 1773.

† Malte Brun Geog. lib. 83.



dollars.\* Of copper the natives used two kinds; one hard, from which they made their instruments of war, of agriculture, and the mechanic arts; the other soft, which they wrought into vessels for religious and domestic purposes. This metal was formerly procured in the greatest quantities from the provinces of Zacatollan, and Cohuixcas; at present it is chiefly supplied from that of Michuacan.†

Tin was dug from the mines of Tlacho and lead from those of *Ismiquilpan*, in the country of the Otomies. Of the former the Mexicans made money; but though the latter was sold in their markets, we are not acquainted with the use to which it was applied. They possessed also, mines of iron in Tlascala, Tlacho, and in other places; but they were ignorant of the qualities of this most precious of all minerals. There were mines of quicksilver in Chilapan; and sulphur, alum, vitriol, cinnabar, ochre, and a white earth resembling white lead, were found in various parts of the country. We know not how the mercury and vitriol were employed; but, the other minerals were used in painting and dying. Amber and asphaltum were gathered abundantly on both coasts, and were tributary commodities. The former was set in gold; and the latter was a chief ingredient of the incense offered to the gods.‡

Precious stones including diamonds, which were rare; amethysts, cat's eyes, turquoises, cornelians, and some green stones, resembling, and scarce inferior to emeralds, and also chrysal were collected in the mountains of the Mixtecas, the Zapotecas, and the Cohuixcas, and were likewise paid in tribute to the king.

\* Clavigero, lib. 1. Humboldt, N. S.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

Mexico abounded in various stones adapted to agriculture and the arts. In addition to those above named, there were jasper, various marbles, alabaster, load-stone, talc of several kinds, and a species of asbestos.

7. Notwithstanding the numerous mountains of new Spain, it suffers from the want of water and navigable rivers. The Rio Bravo del Norte, and the Rio Colorado, (Red River,) are the only ones remarkable for the length of their course and the quantity of water which they carry to the ocean. In the equinoctial parts of America the rivers are small, although their estuaries are very large. Those most worthy of note, are the *Rio Huasacualco* and the *Papaloupan* or the *Alvarado*, both of which are south-east of Vera Cruz, and may one day facilitate the communication with the kingdom of Guatimala; the *Rio de Moctezuma*, which connects the waters of the lakes and valley of Tenochtitlan with the *Rio Panuco*; the *Rio de Zacatula*; and the *Tololotlan*, called by the Spaniards *Guadalaxera*, or the Great River of St. Jago; which rising in the mountains of Tolloccan, crosses the kingdom of Michuacan, and the lake Chapalla, and after a course of more than six hundred miles discharges itself into the ocean, in the latitude of 22° north.\*

The lakes with which Mexico abounds, and the greater part of which seem annually to diminish in size, are the remains of the great basins that appear once to have existed on the lofty and extensive plains of the Cordillera. Nicaragua, by which it has been proposed, inconsiderately, it would seem, to connect the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans; Chapalla, which covers near one hundred and six square leagues; and Pasquaro or Patzcuaro, said

\* Clavigero lib. 1. Malte Brun lib. 83.

by Humboldt to be one of the most picturesque situations in either continent, were the most considerable. But these did not belong to the Mexican empire. The most important to our history are the two in the Vale of Mexico, of which we have already spoken. That of Chalco extended twelve miles from east to west, and northward, a like distance, with a breadth of six miles to a canal connecting it with the lake of Tezcuco. The latter had an extent of seventeen miles from east to west and somewhat greater from north to south; but it is now much less, the Spaniards having diverted into other channels many rivers which formerly fed it.\* Its waters though sweet when received from the rivers, become salt from its nitrous bed. There were also two smaller lakes in the same vale which had their names from the cities of Tzompanco and Xaltocan. The lake of Tochtlan in the province of Coatzacualco is remarkable for the beauty of its views and the salubrity of its shores.†

We have already said, that the surface of the

\* It is difficult says Humboldt to determine the actual bounds of the lake of Tezcuco, the soil being so argillaceous and smooth that the difference of level for a mile is not more than two decimetres. (7.874 inches.) When the east wind blows with violence the water withdraws towards the western bank and sometimes leaves an extent of more than 600 metres, (1968 feet,) dry. It is in general from 9 to 16 feet in depth, and in some places not more than 3. Hence the commerce of the town of Tezcuco suffered in the dry months of January and February; canoes being prevented by the want of water from going to the capital. Humboldt's New Spain, lib. 3. c. 8.

The vale of Mexico according to the same authority, contained, from the entry of the river Tenango into the lake of Chalco to the hill of Sincoque 18 1-3 leagues in length and from San Gabriel, near the town of Tezcuco to the river Escapusaleco near Guisquiluca, 12½ leagues in breadth. Its superficies is 244½ square leagues, of which 22, less than one-tenth, only are occupied by the lakes. The medium height of the mountains which enclose the valley is 9842 feet above the level of the ocean, and the bottom of the basin is 7468 feet above that level.

† Clavigero. Humboldt. Malte Brun.

four principal lakes occupies nearly a tenth or 22 square leagues of the valley of Mexico. The lake of Xochimilco and Chalco contains  $6\frac{1}{2}$ , Tezcucó  $10\frac{1}{10}$ , San Christobal  $3\frac{6}{10}$ , and Tzompango  $1\frac{3}{10}$ , square leagues. All the humidity furnished by the Cordilleras which surround the plain of Tenochtitlan is collected in the valley. No stream issues from it, except the small brook Tequisquiác which in a ravine of small breadth traverses the northern chain of the mountains to throw itself into the Rio de Tula or Moctezuma. The principal sources of these lakes are, the rivers Papalotla, Tezcucó, Teotihuacan and Tepejacac, (Guadaloupe,) which pour their waters into the lake of Tezcucó; the rivers Pachuca and Quauhtitlan, which flow into the lake Tzumpango. The latter river has the longest course, and its volume is more considerable than all the others put together.

These lakes rise in stages in proportion to their distance from the capital. Next to the lake of Tezcucó, the city of Mexico is the least elevated point of the valley. Its height above that lake is four feet, and of the lake San Christobal eleven feet nine inches. The northern part of the last lake is called the lake of Xaltocan. In this northern part, are two small islands, the villages of Xaltocan and Tonanitla. The lake of San Christobal proper, is separated from that of Xaltocan by a very ancient dyke which leads to the villages of San Pablo and San Thomas de Chiconautla. The most northern lake of the valley, Tzompango, is 29 feet 2 inches higher than the mean level of Tezcucó. A dyke divides this lake into two basins, of which, the eastern bears the name of Coyotepec and the western that of Zitlaltepec. The lake of Chalco is at the southern extremity of the valley, and is separated from the lake of Xochimilco by a narrow dyke which runs from Tuliagualca to San Francisco Tlal-

tengo. The level of the fresh water lakes of Chalco and Xochimilco is only 3 feet 9 inches higher than that of the capital.

The difference of elevation of these four great reservoirs was sensibly felt in the great inundations to which the city had for a long series of ages been exposed before the formation of the drain or canal called the Desague Real de Huehuetoca. The lake of Tzompango flowed over into San Christobal which bursting the dyke that divides it from Tezcuco caused the latter to rise, to traverse the saline grounds of San Lazaro, and to flow impetuously into the streets of Mexico.

8. To complete the description of the Mexican territories we must again cast a glance over the coasts and the seas by which they are washed. The whole of the eastern or Atlantic coast of new Spain may be viewed as an immense dyke or wall, against which the trade winds and the perpetual movement of the waters from east to west, heave up the sand which the agitated oceans hold suspended. The revolving current, arriving from the southern Atlantic Ocean, first rolls past Brazil and Guiana and then laves the Carracas from Cumana to Darien. It returns towards cape Catoche in Yucatan and after long whirling in eddies in the gulph of Mexico, issues by the Bahama channel or gulph of Florida, and directs its course towards the bank of Newfoundland. The sand accumulated by the eddying whirl of the water from the peninsula of Yucatan, to the mouth of the Rio del Norte, insensibly contracts the basin of the gulph of Mexico by adding to the breadth of the continent. The rivers that descend from the Sierra Madre to empty themselves into the sea of the Antilles contribute not a little to fill up and elevate the bottom. The whole of the eastern coast from  $18^{\circ}$  to  $26^{\circ}$  of latitude is



obstructed by bars, over which vessels drawing little water only, can safely pass.

Another serious inconvenience is common to the eastern and western coasts of the Isthmus. Violent storms render it almost impossible during several months to effect a landing; and thus prevent almost all navigation along these shores. The north-west winds, denominated *Las Nortes*, blow in the gulph of Mexico, from the autumnal equinox to the spring. In September and October they are generally mild, and are rudest in the month of March. On the east coast the navigation is very dangerous in the months of July and August; dreadful tornadoes blowing at that time from the south-west. At this season, and even until September and October, the anchorage of San Blas, Acapulco, and all the ports of Guatimala is exceedingly unsafe. During the fine part of the year from October till May, the tranquillity of the ocean is again interrupted in these roadsteads by the furious winds from the north-east and north-west, known by the names of *Papagayo* and *Tehuantepec*.

III. 1. From the preceding geographical sketch we perceive that the coasts of new Spain are almost the only parts which have a warm climate adapted to the productions sought in commerce with the Antilles.\* The former intendency of Vera Cruz, (with the exception of the plateau which extends from Perote to the peak of Orizaba,) Yucatan, the coasts of Oaxaca, the maritime provinces of new St. Andero and Texas the late kingdom of Leon, the province of Cohahuila, the uncultivated country called *Bolson de Mapimi*; the coasts of California, the west part of Sonora. Cinaloa and new Galicia, the southern borders of the former in-

\* Malte Brun Geog. lib. 83. 1. Humboldt Mex. lib. 1. c. 3.

tendencies of Valladolid, Mexico and La Puebla are tracts of country that are low, and only interrupted by inconsiderable eminences. The mean annual temperature of these plains, as well as the ravines that are situated under the tropics, and the elevation of which above the ocean does not exceed 984 feet, is from  $77^{\circ}$  to  $79^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit's thermometer. These fertile regions, denominated by the natives *Tierras Calientes* hot countries, produce sugar, indigo, cotton, and bananas in abundance. But when foreigners, not seasoned to the climate, remain here for any length of time, particularly in populous cities, they become subject to the yellow fever, known by the name of the black vomit or *vomito prieto*. The port of Acapulco and the valleys of Papagayo and Peregrino, are among the hottest and most unhealthy places of the earth. On the eastern coast of new Spain, the great heats are tempered when the north wind brings strata of cold air from Hudson's Bay, towards the parallels of the Havanna and Vera Cruz. These impetuous winds blow from the month of October to that of March. Very often they cool the air to such a degree, that near the Havanna the thermometer descends to  $32^{\circ}$  and at Vera Cruz to  $60^{\circ}$ ; a very remarkable depression of the mercury for countries situated under the torrid zone.

2. On the declivity of the Cordillera, at the height of from 4000 to 5000 feet, there constantly reigns the genial temperature of spring, which does not vary more than eight or nine degrees. Intense heat and excessive cold are equally unknown. This region is termed *Tierras Templades* or temperate countries, in which the mean heat of the whole year is from  $68$  to  $70^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit. This is the delicious climate of *Xalapa*, *Tasco*, and *Chilpaningo*, three towns celebrated for their salubrity, and the abundance of the fruit trees cul-

tivated in their environs. Unfortunately, this medium elevation of 4500 feet, is almost the same as that at which the clouds float above the plains adjacent to the sea; for in consequence of this circumstance, these temperate regions although situated upon elevated ground are often enveloped in dense fogs.

3. The third zone, designated by the appellation *Tierras Frias*, or cold countries comprehends the plateaux that are higher than 7200 feet above the level of the ocean, and of which the medium temperature does not exceed 63° Fahrenheit. In the capital of Mexico the thermometer has been seen some degrees below the freezing point; but this phenomenon is very rare. More commonly the winter is as mild there, as at Naples. In the coldest season the medium heat of the day is from 55° to 58° Fahrenheit. In summer the thermometer in the shade does not rise above 76° Fahrenheit. The most ordinary mean temperature that prevails over the whole of the great plateau of Mexico is 63° F. which is equal to the temperature of the air at Rome; and the olive tree is cultivated with success.

The same plateau, however, according to the classification of the natives, belongs to the *Tierra Frias*. Thus with them, the expressions *cold* and *hot* have no absolute signification. But those plains that are higher than the valley of Mexico; such, for example, whose actual height exceeds 8200 feet, although situated under the tropics, have a climate which even to an inhabitant of the north appears rude and disagreeable. Of this description are the plains of Talma and the heights of Guchil-aqua, where during a great part of the day, the air never becomes hotter than from 43° to 46° F. The olive here bears no fruit.

All the regions denominated cold enjoy a mean temperature of from 52° to 56° F. equal to that of



France and Lombardy. Still vegetation there is much less vigorous, and the plants of Europe do not grow with the same rapidity as in their native soil. The winters at an elevation of 8200 feet are not extremely severe. It must however be admitted that, in summer, the sun never heats the rarified air of these plateaux, sufficiently to accelerate the expansion of flowers, and to bring the fruit to perfect maturity. It is this unvarying equibilty of temperature, this absence of a fervent but ephemeral heat, which impresses a peculiar character on the climate of the equinoctial regions. Accordingly, the cultivation of many vegetables is less successful on the ridge of the Mexican Cordilleras, than on the plains situated to the north of the tropic; although it often happens that the mean temperature of the latter is lower than that of the plateaux comprised between the  $19^{\circ}$  and  $22^{\circ}$  of north latitude.

4. In the equinoctial region of Mexico, and even as far as the  $28^{\circ}$  of north latitude, only two seasons are known; that of the rains, commencing in June, or July, and ending in September, or October; and the dry season, which continues eight months, from October till the end of May. The formation of clouds, and the precipitation of the water dissolved by the air, generally begin on the eastern slope of the Cordillera. These phenomena, accompanied by loud electrical explosions, extend in succession from east to west, in the direction of the trade winds; so that the rain falls fifteen or twenty days later in the central plateau, than at Vera Cruz. Sometimes in the months of December and January, rain, mixed with sleet and snow, is seen falling on the mountains, even, at an actual elevation of more than 6562 feet. These rains, however, continue only a few days; and, cold as they are, they are deemed highly beneficial to the vegetation of wheat,

and the growth of pastures. From the parallel of  $24^{\circ}$  to that of  $30^{\circ}$  the rain falls less frequently, and continues a shorter time. Fortunately, the snow, of which there is a considerable quantity from the  $26^{\circ}$  of latitude, compensates in some measure, for this scarcity of rain.\*

In France, and in the greater part of Europe and of North America, agricultural economy depends almost exclusively on geographical latitude; the configuration of the country, the proximity of the ocean, or other local circumstances, exerting only a feeble influence over the temperature. But in the equinoctial regions of America, the climate, productions, aspect and general features of the country are modified by the elevation of the land above the level of the sea. In latitude  $19^{\circ}$  and  $22^{\circ}$ , sugar, cotton, and especially cocoa and indigo, do not afford an abundant crop at a greater elevation than 2000, or 2600 feet. European wheat, occupies a zone which, on the slope of the mountains, generally commences at the height of 4585 feet, and terminates at 9752 feet. The banana, which constitutes the principal nourishment of the inhabitants of the tropics, ceases to bear fruit above the level of 5000 feet. The oak of Mexico grows only between 2500 and 10.000 feet of elevation. The pine descends towards the shores of Vera Cruz, only as low as 6068 feet, and does not rise higher towards the line of perpetual snow, than 13.100 feet.†

The provinces denominated *internas*, situated in the temperate zone, between  $30^{\circ}$  and  $38^{\circ}$  of latitude, have with the rest of North America, a climate essentially different from that, under the same parallels, on the old continent. It is particu-

\* Malte Brun, Geog. lib. 83. Humboldt, N. S.

† Humboldt, N. S. Malte Brun.

larly distinguished by a striking irregularity in the temperature of the different seasons. Winters of German rigour succeed summers that vie with those of Naples and Sicily. But this difference of temperature is less marked in those parts of the new continent which approach the Pacific Ocean.

If the plateau of new Spain be singularly cold in winter, the temperature of summer is far higher than could be inferred from the thermometrical observations made in the Andes of Peru.\* To this heat and other local causes, we must attribute the aridity, by which its interior, particularly an extensive portion of Anahuac, is completely stripped of its vegetation. The enormous mass of the Mexican Cordillera and the immense extent of its plains produce a reflection of the solar rays, which at an equal height is not observed in other mountainous countries of more unequal surface. Independently of this circumstance, the great elevation of the land, causing a diminution of atmospheric pressure sensibly augments the evaporation from its surface. On the other hand the Cordillera, is not sufficiently high to send many of its peaks into the region of perpetual snow. This snow, at the period of its minimum, in the month of September does not descend, under the parallel of Mexico, lower than 14.400 feet, but in January its boundary is marked at 12.150 feet. To the north, from latitude  $20^{\circ}$ , and especially, from  $22^{\circ}$  to  $30^{\circ}$ , the rains, which continue only during the months of June, July, August, and September, are by no means frequent in the interior of the country. The current of heated air, ascending from the plains, prevents the clouds from being precipitated in the form of rain, and thus saturating the dry saline earth, almost denuded of shrubs. There are few springs in the mountains,

\* By Bouguer and Condamine.

which are chiefly composed of porous amygdaloid, and laminated and shattered porphyries. Instead of collecting in small subterraneous basins, the water filters through the earth, and loses itself in the crevices which have been opened by ancient volcanic eruptions, and issues only at the base of the Cordillera, forming on the coast a great number of rivers, whose course is very short.

The aridity of the central table, and the want of trees, operate injuriously to the working of the mines; and those evils have greatly increased since the arrival of Europeans in Mexico. Not only have the conquerors destroyed without planting, but by artificial draining they have augmented a most important evil. The muriates of soda, and of lime, the nitrate of potass, and other saline substances, cover the surface of the soil; and spread with a rapidity very difficult to be explained. Through this abundance of salt, and these efflorescences, hostile to cultivation, the table land of Mexico, bears a great resemblance in many places to Thibet, and the saline steppes of central Asia.

Happily this noxious aridity of soil prevails only on the most elevated plains. A great part of the vast country of Mexico belongs to the most fertile regions of the earth. The declivity of the Cordillera is exposed to humid winds, and frequent fogs, which promote a vegetation of uncommon beauty and luxuriance. The humidity of the coasts assisting the putrefaction of organic substances, generates maladies, dangerous to unacclimated inhabitants; and under the burning sun of the tropics, the insalubrity of the air, commonly indicates extraordinary fertility of soil. Nevertheless, with the exception of a few sea ports, and some deep and moist valleys where the natives suffer from intermittent fever; Mexico, should be considered as a remarkably healthy country.

It is however afflicted by a pest peculiar to the Indian race, which, though it appears but after long intervals, has been very destructive. This disease called *Matlazahuatl*, raged violently in 1545, 1576, and 1736. As its latest visit took place at a time when medicine was not considered a science, even in the capital, we have no exact data in relation to it. It bears some analogy to the yellow fever, but it never attacks the whites, European or native; while the latter seldom preys upon the Indian. The principal seat of the yellow fever, is the warm, and humid country of the coast; but the *Matlazahuatl* carries terror and destruction into the interior of the country, to the central table land, and its coldest and most arid regions. Torquemada asserts, doubtless without sufficient evidence, that this disease swept away 80.000 Indians in 1544, and 2.000.000 in 1576.

Humboldt, in considering this subject, asks, whether this pest may be identified with that, which is said to have desolated from time to time, the Atlantic regions of the United States, before the arrival of the Europeans; and which the venerated Dr. Rush, deemed the principle of the yellow fever. ?\*

\* Humboldt's New Spain, lib. 2. c. 5.



## CHAPTER II.

- I. *Great variety of the vegetable productions of Mexico.....* II. *Of vegetables, employed as food, &c.* 1. *Banana, Sweet Potato, Yam, Cacomite, Tomatl, Earth Pistachio, Pimento, Onions, Gourds, &c.* 2. *Fruits, Tzapottl, various kinds, Capollino, Nance, Chayoti, Cacahuate, Cacao, Vanilla, Xocoxochitli, or Pepe de Tabasco, Rocou, Palms.* 3. *Fruits from which beverages were prepared, Metl, Maguy, Pulque.....* III. *Of vegetables used in the arts.* 1. *Variety, and abundance of timber.* 2. *Of resinous trees, Balsam of Mexico, Liquid Amber, Copal, Tecopalli, Mezquitl, or Gum Arabic, Gum Lac, Espatli, or Dragon's blood, Caoutchouc, or Gum Elastic.*

After the rapid view of Mexico, taken in the preceding chapter, in which we have sought to describe the ancient limits of its provinces, their physical aspect, temperature, and natural fertility, it will be proper to exhibit its vegetable productions, whilst subject to the native kings.

I. Extending through many degrees of latitude, this great country, must necessarily possess many modifications of climate, and consequent diversity of vegetation, which are greatly increased by the singular geological construction we have noticed. It may therefore readily be conceived, that the variety of indigenous productions is immense; and that there scarce grows a plant in any other part of the globe, which may not be cultivated in some one of the Mexican territories. Notwithstanding the laborious researches of many distinguished botan-

*Tiltzapott**Hopalxochiquetzalli**Halecahuatl*





ists, we cannot flatter ourselves that we know any thing like all the vegetable wealth scattered over insulated summits, or buried in the vast forests of the Cordillera.

II. In treating this subject we shall not divide the plants according to the latitude of the country, nor the altitude of the soil in which they grow, but shall arrange them in the order of their utility to society, beginning with the vegetables which formed the food and amusement of the people, and afterwards, advert to such, as afford materials to manufacturing industry.

1. The banana, of which we have spoken fully in the preceding volume,\* abounded in the warm portions of the equinoctial parts of the country. We may add, however, that a third species, (the *Musa Regia*, of Rumphius,) not noticed in the history of the Antilles, was also cultivated in Mexico.

The manioc, or cassava root, the *batate*, or sweet potato, the *yam*, or *igname*, were also abundantly planted, in such regions as were adapted to their cultivation. To these we must also add the *cacomite*, or *oceloxochitl*, a species of *tigridia*, of which the root yielded a nutritive flour; the numerous varieties of love apple or tomatl, (*solanum lycopersicum*,) which was formerly sown with maize; the earth pistachio, or *mani*, (*arachis hypogea*,) which appears to have existed in Cochin China, long before the discovery of America; the different species of pimento, (*capsicum*, *caccatum*, *c. annuum*, and *c. frutescens*,) called by the Mexicans, *chilli*, of which the fruit is as indispensibly necessary to the natives, as salt to the whites; onions, (in Mexican *xonacatl*;) haricots, (*ayacotli*,) gourds, (*capallu*,) and several va

\* See Volume II. "Spanish Discoveries," page 229

rieties of cicer. Cortes, speaking of the edibles daily sold in the market of Tenochtitlan, says, that every kind of garden stuff, (*legume*,) was to be found there, particularly onions, leeks, garlic, garden, and water cresses, borragé, sorrel, and artichokes. It does not appear that any species of turnip, or cabbage was cultivated, although the Indigenes are very fond of dressed herbs. They made a dish called *iraca*, composed of a variety of leaves, and even flowers mixed together. The Mexicans had originally no peas; and this fact is the more remarkable, as the *pisum sativum*, is said to grow wild on the north-west coast of America.\*

2. For its present great diversity of fruit, Mexico is indebted to its variety of soil and climate, and to the enterprize of the conquerors. They have naturalized here, the fruits of almost every region of the globe: The cocoa-nut, the citron, orange, and lemon; the apple, peach, quince, apricot, pear, pomegranate, fig, black cherry, walnut, almond, olive, chesnut, water-melon, and grape, have all been imported, and all yield abundantly. It would seem, however, that there were two kinds of indigenous grapes; one, red, with a hard skin, of a sweet and grateful taste; but the other, hard, large, and of a very harsh flavour. The traveller is at once surprized, and delighted, to find on the tables of the wealthy Mexican, in the highest perfection, the most delicious fruits of the temperate and torrid zones.

The fruits, which are unquestionably original in that country, are, the *anana*, or *pine apple*, the *mamei*, *chirimoya*, *anona*, *cabeza di negro*, *black zapote*, *chicozapote*, *white zapote*, *yellow zapote*, *zapote di S. Dominico*, *alihuacate*,

\* *Voyage de Marchand*, tom. 1. p. 226, and 360.

*guayaba, capulino, guava, or cuaxinicuil, pitahaya, papaya, guanabana, plums, dates, chajoti, tilapo, obo, or tlobo, nance, cacahuate*, the cocoa, or chocolate-nut, vanilla, *xocoxochitli*, or *pepe di tabasco*. *Rocou*, or arnotto, the palm, and many others less distinguished. Most of these fruits, are described in the works of Oviedo, Acosta, Hernandez, De Laet, Nieremberg, Marcgrave, Pison, Barrere, Sloane, Ximenes, Ulloa, and others; we shall notice here, such only as are the least known, and have not been described in the preceding volume of this work.

The fruits comprehended by the Mexicans, under the generic name of Tzapotl, are round, and have a hard stone. The black zapote, has a green, light, smooth, tender bark; a black, soft, and savoury pulp, which has the appearance of cassia, within which, are flat, blackish stones. The diameter of the fruit, is from one and a half, to four or five inches. The tree is of a moderate size, and thickness, with small leaves. Ice of the pulp, seasoned with sugar and cinnamon, is of a most delicate taste.\*

The white zapote, which from its native virtue, was called by the Mexicans, Cochitzapotl, is similar to the black, in size, figure, and colour of the bark; but differs from it much in other particulars. The stone, said to be poisonous, is large, round, hard, and white. The stem and leaves of the tree are larger than those of the black. The latter is peculiar to a warm, and the former to a temperate climate.

The chicozapote, is from one and a half, to two inches in diameter; skin grey, pulp white, and the stone black. From this fruit, when green, the Mexicans draw a glutinous milk, which readily

\* Clavigero, lib. 1.

condenses, called, *chictli*, and which the children chew. In Colima, they form it into small statues, and other fanciful figures. When fully ripe this is a delicious fruit, superior to any of Europe. The tree is moderately large, and fit for the carpenter, or joiner; the leaves are round, and in colour and consistence, like those of the orange. It grows spontaneously in the hot countries; and in Mixteca, Huasteca, and Michuacan, there are forests of it twelve or fifteen miles in extent.

The capollino, or capulin, as the Spaniards call it, is the cherry of Mexico. The tree differs little from the cherry tree of Europe; and the fruit only in the taste.

The nance, is a small round fruit, yellow, aromatic, and savoury, with extremely small seeds. It is peculiar to the warm climates.

The chayoti, is a round fruit, similar in the husk to the chesnut, but four or five times larger, and of a deeper green colour. The kernel is of a greenish white, and has a stone in the middle which is also white, and of a like substance. It is boiled, and the stone eaten with it. It grows upon a parasitical perennial plant, the root of which is also edible.

The cacahuete, is a species of ground-nut, somewhat similar to that which grows in the southern part of the United States. It was rare in Mexico, but the natives extracted an oil from it, which gave a beautiful light.

Of the cacao, or chocolate-nut, there were four species; but the tlacacahuatl, the smallest was most used by the Mexicans, in the fabrication of chocolate, and other beverages. The other species were used more as money, than as aliment. The tree was generally cultivated in the warm countries of the empire, and its produce paid in tribute to the crown.

The vanilla, so well known from its delightful

flavour and fragrance, grows wild in the warmer districts and was used by the ancient, as by the present inhabitants, in their various preparations from cacao.

The *xocochitli*, vulgarly known as the *pepe de Tabasco*, from its abounding in that province, is larger than the pepper of Malabar. It grows on a large tree, whose leaves have the colour and lustre of those of the orange; and whose flowers are of a beautiful red, similar in figure to those of the pomgranite, and of a most penetrating and pleasing scent, of which the branches also partake. The fruit, which is round, and grows in clusters, becomes dark as it ripens. It was much used by the ancient Mexicans, and may supply the want of the pepper of Malabar.

The rocou, or arnotto, called by the Mexicans, *achiote*, served them for dying as it now does the Europeans, and North Americans.

Besides the date palm, there are several other species in Mexico, some of which, we have already described in our account of the West India islands. We may notice here, the variety called by the Mexicans *Teoiczotl*, and that, to which the Spaniards have given the name of *cocos de aceite*, or cocoa of oil. The first has a soft trunk surrounded with circular leaves of a gross substance, white, smooth, and shining, which appear like so many shells heaped on each other, with which the Indians formerly, as now, adorned the verdant arches which they constructed for their festivals. The second produced a nut in figure and size like the nutmeg, with a white oily edible kernel, covered by a thin purple pellicle. The oil has a sweet scent, is easily congealed, and in that state is soft, and white as snow.

3. Before we close this list of alimentary plants, we must remark such as furnished beverages to the



Mexicans. In this point of view the history of the Aztec agriculture, presents us with a trait the more curious, as we find nothing analagous among many nations more advanced in civilization, than the ancient inhabitants of Anahuac.

There scarce exists a tribe of savages on the face of the earth, that cannot prepare some kind of beverage, from the vegetable kingdom. The miserable hordes which wander in the forests of Guayana, make as agreeable emulsions from the different palm tree fruits, as the barley water prepared in Europe. The inhabitants of Easter island, confined to a mass of arid rocks, without springs, besides the sea water, drinks the juice of the sugar cane. The most part of civilized nations, draw their drinks from the plants which yield them food, whose seeds or roots contain the saccharine principal united with the amylaceous substance. Rice in southern, and eastern Asia, in Africa, the igname root with a few arums, and in the north of Europe, cerealia furnish fermented liquors. There are few nations who cultivate plants merely with the view to prepare beverages from them. The old continent affords us no instance of vine plantations, east of the Indus. Even in the better days of Greece, this cultivation was confined to the countries situated between the Oxus and Euphrates, to Asia Minor and western Europe. On the rest of the globe, nature produces the wild vines; but no where else did man collect them around him, and endeavour to ameliorate them by cultivation.

But on the new continent, we have the example of a people, who not only extracted liquors from the *maize*, the *manioc*, and *banana*, and from the pulp of several species of *mimosa*, but who cultivated a plant of the family of *anonas*, expressly, with the design to convert its juice into a spirituous liquor. On the interior table land of Pu-

ebla, and of Mexico, there are vast tracts of country, where the eye reposes only on fields, planted with *pittes*, or maguey, called by the natives, *metl* and by many authors, the American aloe, from its similarity to that plant. There are many varieties of this plant cultivated, all which belong to the *agave americanus*. The liquor drawn from it, is called by the natives *octli*, and by the Spaniards *pulque*.

The plant begins to yield the juice, which in its unfermented state is called honey, only, when its *hampe*, or flower stock, is on the point of development. It is therefore, of the greatest importance for the cultivator to know, exactly the period of efflorescence. Its approach is announced by the direction of the radical leaves, which are observed by the Indians with much attention. These leaves, which till then, are inclined towards the earth, rise suddenly to cover the *hampe*. The bundle of central leaves, (*el corazon* or heart,) becomes at the same time of a clearer green, and lengthens perceptibly. The proprietor goes daily through his plantation to note these signs. If he has doubts, he applies to the *experts* of his village, old Indians, who from long experience, have a judgment, or rather tact, more safely to be relied on.

The period of efflorescence, depends upon the nature of the soil, and situation. Where these are very favourable, the plant gives signs of the development of the *hampe*, in five or eight years, but from poor ground, no harvest can be expected in less than eighteen years. The mesne period at which a plantation becomes profitable, is fifteen years.

The cultivation of the *agave*, has real advantages over that of maize, grain, and potatoes. With firm and vigorous leaves, it is unaffected by drought



or hail, or the extreme cold, on the higher Cordilleras. It is usually planted in rows, about five feet apart. The stalk perishes after efflorescence. If it be deprived of the central leaves, it withers, after the juice, which nature has destined to the increase of the *hampe*, is exhausted. An infinity of shoots then springs from the decayed plant; for no vegetable multiplies with greater facility. An acre of ground, contains from twelve to thirteen hundred plants. If the field have been long cultivated, a twelfth, or fourteenth of these may yield *honey* annually. A proprietor, who plants from thirty to forty thousand maguey, is sure to establish the fortune of his children; but it requires patience and courage to pursue a species of cultivation whose return is so long procrastinated.

When the flowering stem is about to shoot, the manufacturer of the *pulque*, cuts the *corazon* and insensibly enlarges the wound, which he covers with lateral leaves, drawn up close, and tied at the extremities. In this wound, the vessels appear to deposit all the juice which would have formed the colossal *hampe*, and its load of flowers. This is a true vegetable spring, which runs for two or three months, and which the Indian drains three or four times a day. A root commonly yields about a gallon every twenty-four hours; of which three pints are drawn at sunrise, two at mid-day, and the remainder in the evening. A very vigorous plant, sometimes yields fifteen pints a day, during four or five months, which amounts to the enormous volume of near three hundred gallons.\* This abundance of juice, produced by a *maguey*, scarcely five feet high, is the more astonishing, as the agave plantations are in the most arid grounds, and fre-

\* The quantity, stated by Humboldt, is 1.100 cubic decimetres, = to, 67.120 cubic inches English.

quently on beds of rocks, barely covered with vegetable mould. The value of a plant, near its efflorescence, is five dollars. In a barren soil, the cultivator calculates the produce of each plant, at one hundred and fifty bottles; and the value of the pulque furnished in a day at from ten to twelve cents. The produce, however, is unequal, like that of the vine which varies much in its quantity of grapes. A case is mentioned by Humboldt, of an Indian woman, who bequeathed to her children maguey plantations, valued at eighty thousand dollars.

The juice, has an agreeable acid taste, and ferments easily, because of the sugar and mucilage it contains. To accelerate the fermentation, which terminates in three or four days, a little old, and acetous pulque is added. The vinous beverage which resembles cider, has an odour of putrid meat, extremely disagreeable;\* but foreigners who get over the aversion which this fetid smell inspires, prefer the *pulque*, to every other liquor. They consider it, as stomachic, strengthening, and especially, nutritive; and it is recommended to persons of a macerated habit.

The cultivation of the maguey was under the Spanish government, so important to the revenue, that the net duties collected on it, amounted in 1793, to 761.131 dollars. And subsequently to that period, a greater duty, alike vexatious, and inconsiderate, was laid on its cultivation. A very intoxicating brandy, called *mexical*, or *aguardiente de maguey*, is formed from the *pulque*; and the business of its distillation though prohibi-

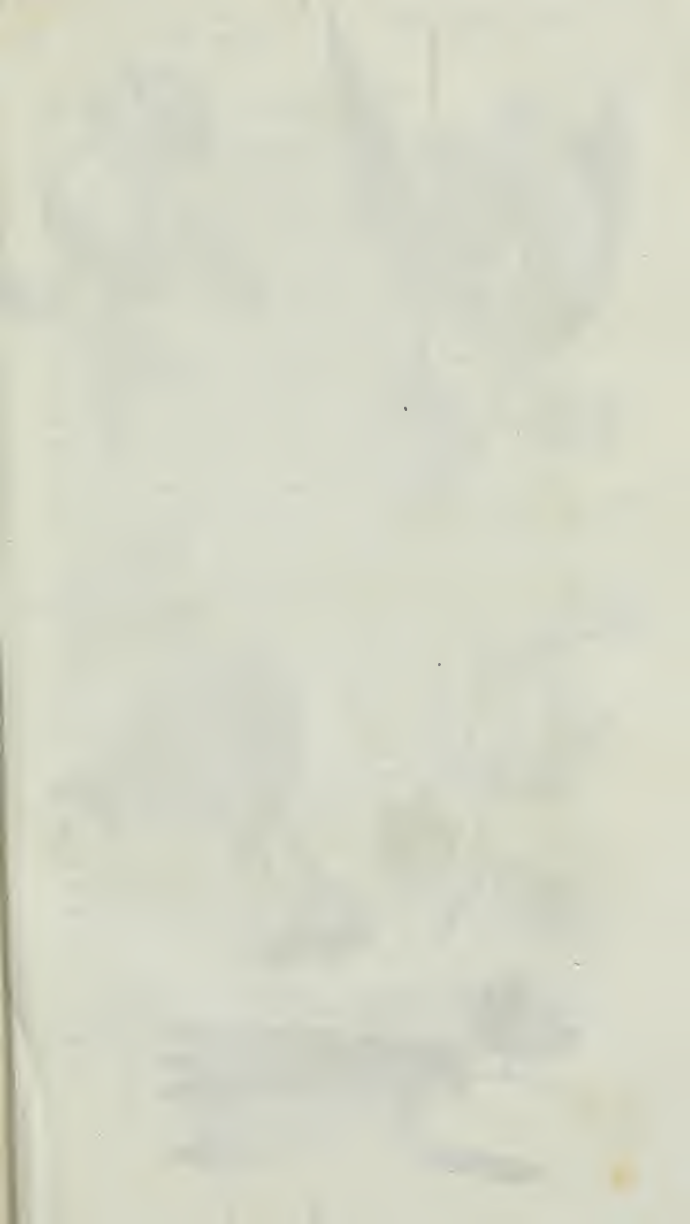
\* It would seem, that this odour, is not inseparable from pulque; that drank by Mr. Poinsett, at Agualco, was free from it. He says, "it was white and sparkling, like champagne, but not so clear. The taste is pleasant, and I am not surprised, that the people of the country are fond of it." Notes on Mexico. 34.

ted by the government, became extensive and lucrative.

But the maguey, was not only the vine of the Aztecs; it supplied the place of the hemp of Asia, and the papyrus of the Egyptians. The paper on which the Mexicans painted their hieroglyphic figures, was made of the fibres of agave leaves, macerated in water, and disposed in layers, like the fibres of the Egyptian cyperus, and the mulberry of the South Sea islands. This paper, was made of different thicknesses, some sheets resembling paste-board, and others, Chinese paper. The thread obtained from the agave, is known in Europe, by the name of *pite* thread; and is preferred by naturalists, to every other, because it is less subject to twist. The juice of the plant, drawn before the period of efflorescence, is very acrid; and is successfully employed as a caustic, in cleaning wounds. The prickles which terminate the leaves, served formerly, like those of the cactus, for pins and nails to the Indians; and the priests and devotees, pierced their arms and breasts with them, in their acts of expiation, analagous to those of the Bud-dists of Hindostan.\*

III. 1. For the excellence, variety, and abundance of its timber, Mexico is not surpassed by any country in the world; each variety of its climate, producing its peculiar wood. We shall merely name such, as are most known; whilst we describe particularly, such as are rare or curious. Besides, oak, fir, pine, cypress, beech, ash, poplar, and other trees, common to temperate, and cold climates, there are entire forests of cedar, or ebony; an abundance of *agalloco*, or wood of aloe, in Mixteca; of *tapinzecan*, in Michuacan; of *caoba*, in *Chiapan*; of *palo gateado*, which might be called,

\* 2 Humboldt's, Mex. lib. 4. c. 9.



Coatzacoatzcochitl

Toltecochitl

Vol. I



Macpalcocchitl



Coatzacoatzcochitl



Toltecochitl

creeping wood, in Zoncolihcan; of *camote*, in the mountains of Tezcoco; of *granadillo*, or red ebony, in Mixteca, and elsewhere; *misquitl*, or real acacia, *tepehuaxin*, *copti*, *jabin*, *guayacan*, or holy wood, *oyametl*, the wood of Zopilote; and innumerable others, valuable for their durability, their hardness, and weight, their pliability, or facility of being wrought, the elegance of their colours, or the pleasantness of their odour. The *camote*, is of a beautiful purple; and the *granadillo*, a dark red colour; but the *palo gateado*, *caoba*, and *tzopiloquahuitl*, or wood of Zopilot, are still more admirable. The hardness of the *guayacan*, is well known in Europe; the *jabin* has the same property in no less degree. The aloe wood of Mixteca, although different from the true *agalloco* of the east, is not less estimable for its delightful scent, especially when freshly cut.

Hernandez, whom Humboldt calls the Linneus of America, describes in his Natural History, about an hundred species of trees; but having devoted his study to medicinal plants, he omits the greater part of those, most distinguished by their size, and value of their wood. There are trees, which for their height and circumference, are prodigious. Acosta, speaks of a cedar, the circumference of whose trunk, was more than eighty-two Parisian feet; and in the valley of Atlixo, there grew a very ancient fir, that had been scathed by lightning, within the cavity of whose trunk, fourteen men on horseback, could conveniently enter; and the archbishop Lorenzana, who visited this tree in 1770, made one hundred young lads get within it.\* Along side of

\* Clavigero, lib. 1.

Its circumference is  $76\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Humboldt (New Spain, lib. 3. c. 8.) says, that at the village of Santa Maria del Tule, three leagues east of the capital, between Santa Lucia, and Tlacoehiquaya, there is an enormous trunk of *cupressus disticha*, (*sabino*,) of



this gigantic monarch of the woods, we may place the ceibas, or wild cotton tree, and the Indian fig.

2. A short notice of the resinous trees of Mexico, for which it is highly famed, will close our imperfect view of its vegetable kingdom.

The resin, known as the balsam of Mexico, distils from the *huitziloxitl*, a tree of moderate height, with leaves like those of the almond, but larger; wood reddish, and odorous, and the bark grey, covered with a reddish pelicle. The flowers are pale, and spring from the end of the branches. The seed is small, white, and crooked, and proceeds from the extremity of a thin shell, a foot long. From every part of the tree, where an incision is made, especially after rains, this precious gum, no way inferior to the balm of Mecca, exudes. It is of a reddish black, or a yellowish white, running of both colours from the same incision, of a sharp, and bitter taste, and an intense, but most grateful odour. It was sometimes obtained by burning and macerating the branches. An oil, is also procured from the fruit, similar in smell and taste to that of the almond, but more acrimonious and ardent, very useful in medicine. From the *huaconex*, and *maripenda*, an oil is also extracted, similar in its qualities to the balm of the *huitziloxitl*. The *huaconex*, is a tree of moderate height, of an aromatic and hard wood, which keeps fresh for years, though buried under the earth. Its leaves are small and yellow, flowers small and white, and the fruit similar to that of the laurel. The *maripenda*, is a shrub, whose leaves are like the iron of a lance, with a fruit similar to the grape, growing in clusters, and red when ripe. The first balsam brought from

36 metres, 118 feet, in circumference. This ancient tree is consequently larger than the cypress of Atlixo, the *dragonier*, of the Canary islands, and all the *boababs* (*adansonix*), of Africa.



Mexico to Rome, sold at an hundred ducats the ounce, and was declared by the Apostolic See, as fit for chrism, or the holy unction.

The *xochiocotzotl*, commonly called liquid amber, is the storax of the Mexicans. It is extracted from a tree, bearing leaves similar to those of the maple, indented, white in one part, and dark in the other, and disposed in triplets; fruit thorny, round but polygonous, with the surface, and the angles yellow. The bark is in part green, in part tawny. By incision in the trunk, the precious resin, called by the Spaniards, *liquid amber*, and the oil of the same name, more odorous and estimable, are obtained. The amber is also procured from a decoction of the branches, but it is inferior to that which distils from the trunk.

The Mexican name, *copalli*, is generic, and common to all the resins; but especially, signifies those used for incense. There are ten species of trees which yield these sorts of resin, and differ not only in their names, but in their foliage and fruit, and in the quality of the resin. That simply called copal as the principal, is a white transparent resin, which distils from a large tree, whose leaves resemble those of the oak, but larger, and whose fruit is round, and reddish. The gum copal is well known for its utility in medicine, and in the arts. The ancient Mexicans used it chiefly in burnt offerings, which they made for the worship of their idols; or to pay respect to ambassadors, and persons of the first rank. The *tecopalli*, or *tepecopalli*, is a resin similar in colour, odour, and taste, to the incense of Arabia, which distils from a tree of moderate size, that grows in the mountains, the fruit of which, is like an acorn, containing the nut enveloped in a mucilage, within which is a small kernel, useful in medicine. These trees, and the *caragna*, and the *tecamaca*, whose resins are well

known in the apothecaries shops, and others producing gums, not here described, are peculiar to the warm climates.

The mezquitl, or mezquite, as the Spaniards call it, is a species of true acacia, and its gum, is the true gum arabic. It is a thorny shrub, whose branches are most irregularly disposed; flowers like the birch, leaves small, thin, and pinnated. Its fruits are sweet, edible shells, containing a seed of which anciently, the barbarous Cicimecas made a paste, which served them for bread. Its wood is exceedingly hard, and heavy, and is as common in Mexico, as oak in Europe.

The *gum lac*, runs in such abundance, from a tree like the mezquite, that the branches are covered with it. The tree is of moderate size, has a red coloured trunk, and is very common in the provinces of the Coahuixcas, and Tlahuica.

Dragon's blood, (ezpatli,) flows from the tree, called ezquahuitl, which grows in the mountains of *Quauhchinanco*, and Coahuixca.

The *caoutchouc*, or gum elastic, called by the Mexicans, *olin*, or *olli*, and by the Spaniards, *ule*, has of late years been employed for so many purposes, and become so considerable a subject of commerce, that it is almost universally known. The tree from which it flows, is of moderate size, and has the trunk smooth and yellowish, the leaves large, the flowers white, the fruit yellow, and somewhat angular; within which, are white kernels, as large as filberts, covered with a yellowish pelticle. The kernel has a bitter taste, and the fruit, always grows attached to the bark of the tree. When the trunk is cut, the *ule*, which distils from it is white, liquid, and viscous; it next becomes yellow, and lastly, of a leaden colour, inclining to black, which it always retains. Those who gather it can model it into any form desired.

The Mexicans made their foot balls of this gum, which were more elastic than those filled with air. At present, besides other uses to which it is applied, it is made into over shoes, into varnish, for boots, shoes, hats, coats, and cloaks, all which it renders water-proof; and when made liquid by fire, it yields a medicinal oil. This tree grows in the hot countries, such as Ihualapan, and Mecatlin, and is common in the kingdom of Guatemala, and in South America, in the basin of the Orinoco.

The *quauhxiotl*, is a middle sized tree, with round leaves, and reddish bark. There are two species: the one yields a white gum, which gives to water a milky colour; the other drops a reddish resin; both are serviceable in dysenteries.

Among the plants useful in the arts, we should give a place to the fir, the *higuerilla*, (which resembles the fig,) and the *ocote*, a species of pine, very aromatic, on account of the oil they yield; and also to the Brazil wood, log-wood, indigo, and many others, for their juices; but some of these are generally known, and we shall have occasion to treat of others elsewhere.

## CHAPTER III.

- I. *Of the Animal Kingdom of Mexico....* II. *Quadrupeds common to the Eastern, and Western Continents, Mitzli or Lion, Tiger, Rabbit, Wild Cat, Bears, Hares, Wolves, Flying Rat, Polatuca, Common Rat....* III. *Quadrupeds, common to Mexico and other Countries of America....* IV. *Quadrupeds, peculiar to Anahuac....* V. *Of the Birds of Mexico. 1. Birds of Prey. 2. Nocturnal Birds. 3. Aquatic Birds. 4. Birds used as food. 5. Birds valued for their plumage. 6. Singing Birds. 7. Talking Birds. 8. Twilight Birds....* VI. *Reptiles of Mexico, Serpents....* VII. *Fish....* VIII. *Insects....* IX. *Of the Human Race in Mexico.*

I. The animal kingdom of Anahuac, is not better known than the vegetable, although it has received much attention from the naturalist Hernandez. The difficulty of distinguishing the species, and the impropriety of appellations, taken from analogy, have rendered its history perplexed and obscure. The first Spaniards, who gave names to the animals, were better warriors, than naturalists. Instead of retaining those used by the Mexicans, which would have been the most proper, they denominated animals, tigers, wolves, bears, dogs, squirrels, &c. although they were very different in kind, merely from some resemblance, in the colour of the skin, or in the figure, or in some similarity of habit, or disposition. We cannot pretend to correct their errors, still less to illustrate the natural history of this vast country, but only to give the

reader some slight idea of the quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes and insects, which were indigenous to the land and waters of Anahuac.

II. The quadrupeds, originally common to Mexico and the old continent, are, lions, tigers, wild cats, bears, wolves, foxes, the common stags, white stags, bucks, wild goats, badgers, polecats, weazles, martins, squirrels, polatucas, rabbits, hares, otters, and rats.

The mitzli, of the Mexicans, is certainly the lion without hair, mentioned by Pliny, and totally distinct from the African lion. The *ocelotl*, is in no way different from the African tiger. The *tochtli*, is exactly the rabbit of the old continent, and at least as ancient as the Mexican calendar; in which the figure of this animal, was the first symbolical character of the year. The wild cats are much larger than the domestic cats, and are fierce and dangerous. The bears are black, and larger than those of central Europe. The hares are distinguished from those of the old country, by longer ears; and the wolves by a grosser head. The name *polatuca*, is given by M. Buffon, to the *quimickpatlan*, or flying rat of the Mexicans. Clavigero calls this animal, rat, because it resembles it in the head, though it is much larger; and *flying*, because the skin of its sides which is loose and wrinkled, is distended, and expanded with its feet, like wings, when it makes a considerable leap from tree to tree. In this description we recognize the *flying squirrel* of North America, in every thing except the size; and it is so called by the Spaniards. Mice, were brought to Mexico in European ships; but the rat was not; but was known to the Mexicans by the name of *quimichan*, which term they applied metaphorically to their spies.

III. The quadrupeds common to Mexico and other regions of the new world, are, the *cojametl*,



*epatl*, several species of apes, comprehended by the Spaniards under the generic name of *monos*; the *ajotochtli*, the *aztacojotl*, *tlacuatzin*, *techichi*, *telalmototli*, *techallotl*, *amiztli*, *mapach*, and the *Danta*.

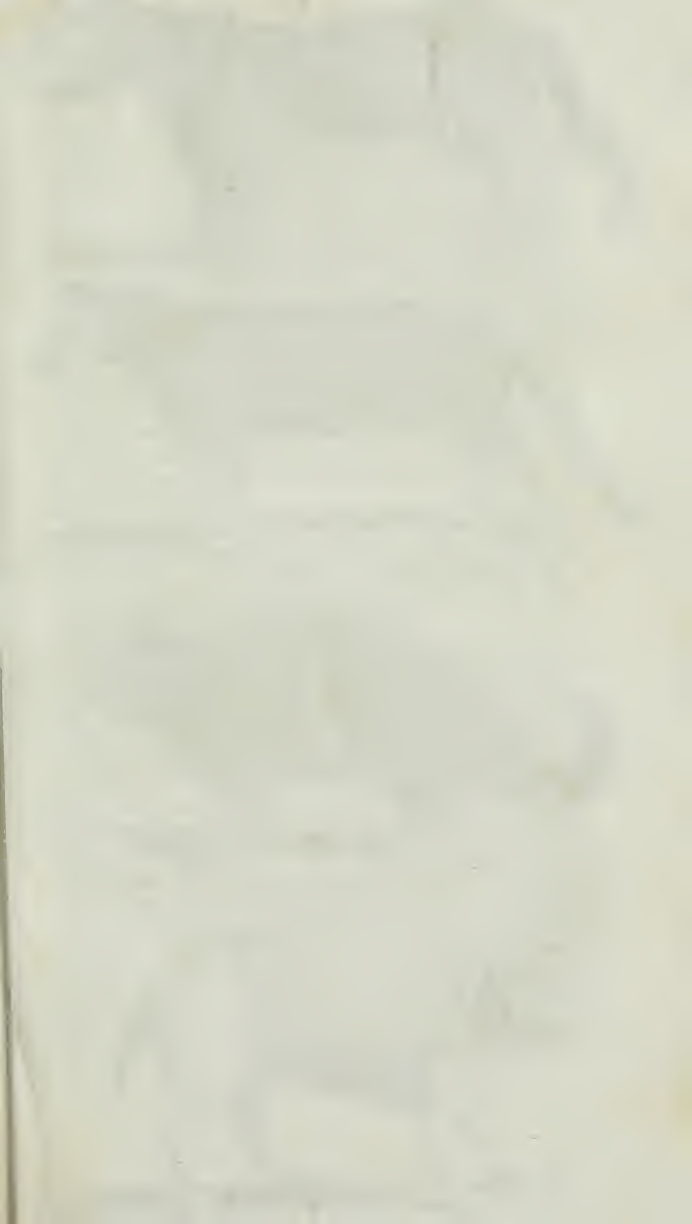
The *cojametl*, is the pecari of the West Indies, which we have described in our preceding volume. The *epatl*, called by the Spaniards, *zorillo*, or small fox, is the *skunk*, or polecat, of the United States, less known by the beauty of its skin, than by the intolerable stench it leaves behind, when closely pursued by huntsmen. The *tlacuatzin*, is the opossum. The *ajotochtli*, was the armadillo, the *techichi*, the alco, or mute dog, the *mapach*, the raccoon, all which we have already described.

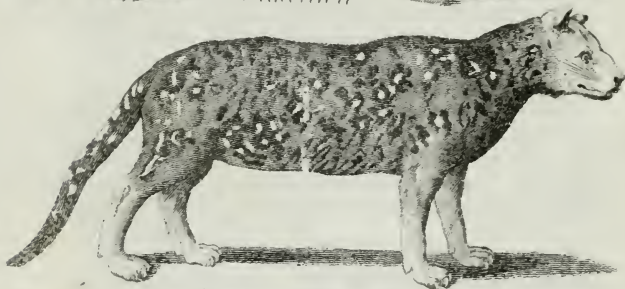
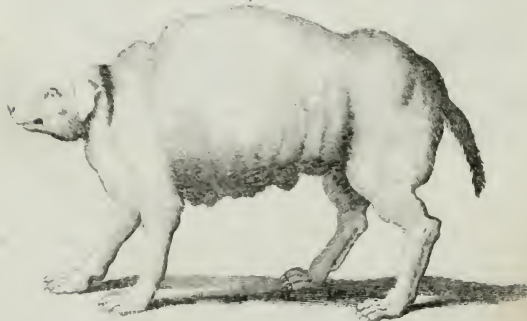
The *tlamototli*, and the *techallotl*, are species of ground squirrel. The hair of the belly is white, and that on the rest of their bodies, is white mixed with grey. The only difference in the species is, that the latter has a smaller, and less hairy tail. They dwell in holes dug in the earth, or among the stones of ramparts, which enclose fields. They do much injury to the grain; bite furiously when approached; cannot be tamed; have great elegance of form, and grace in their movements.

The *amyztli*, or sea-lion, is an amphibious quadruped, which inhabits the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and some rivers of Mexico. Its body is three feet in length, its tail two. Its snout is long, legs short; and nails crooked. Its skin is valuable, on account of the length and softness of its hair.

The *danta*, or *anta*, or *beori*, or *tapir*, as it is differently named in the different countries, is the largest quadruped of Mexico, and approaches most to the sea horse, not however in size, but in some of its shapes and qualities. It is as large as a middle





*Macleodell**Mexican Porcupine**Mexican Weasel*

sized mule; the body a little arched, like that of the hog; the head gross and long, with an appendage to the skin of the upper lip, which it extends or contracts at pleasure; the eyes are small, ears little and round; the legs short; the fore feet have four, the hind feet three nails; the tail is short and pyramidal; the skin thick, and closely coated with hair, which at an advanced age is brown; the teeth which are composed of twenty maxillary, and as many incisors, are strong and sharp, and capable of giving a severe wound. Its flesh is eatable, and the skin is valuable, from being so stout as to resist arrows, and even musket balls. It inhabits the solitary woods of warm countries, near some river or lake, as it lives not less in the water than on land.

The *aztocojotl*, or ant killer, is a quadruped remarkable for the enormous length of its snout, the narrowness of the throat, and immoderate tongue with which it draws the ants from their hills, and from which it has its name.

IV. The quadrupeds, supposed by Clavigero to be peculiar to Anahuac, are the *cojotl*, *tlalcojotl*, *xoloitzcuintli*, *tepeitzcuintli*, *itzcuintepotzotli*, *ocotohtli*, *cojopollin*, *tuza*, *ahuitzotl*, *huitztlacuatzin*.

The *cojotl*, or coyoto, as the Spaniards call it, is a wild beast, voracious as the wolf, cunning as the fox, in form like a dog, and in some qualities similar to the adive, and the jackall. It is about the size of the mastiff, but more slender; has yellow sparkling eyes, small, pointed and erect ears, a blackish snout, strong limbs, and feet armed with large crooked nails; tail thick, and hairy, and in colour, a mixture of black, brown, and white. It has the howl of the wolf, and the bark of the dog; is very common, and destructive to the flocks; pursues the deer, and sometimes, attacks even men.

Its ordinary gate is a trot, but that is so swift, that a horse at the gallop, can scarce overtake it.

The *tlalcojotl*, or *tlalcoyoto*, is of the size of the middling dog, but thicker, and is supposed to be the largest quadruped that burrows in the earth. In the head it is something like the cat, and in colour and length of hair, like the lion. It has a long thick tail; and feeds on poultry, and small animals which it seeks in the obscurity of the night.

The *itzcuintepotzotli*, *tepuitzcuintli*, and *xoloitzcuintli*, are similar to dogs. The first, or hunchbacked dog, is as large as a Maltese dog; skin variegated with white, tawny, and black, head small, and appears to be joined directly to the body, on account of the shortness and thickness of the neck; eyes pleasing, ears loose, nose with a considerable prominence in the middle; and tail, so small, that it scarce reaches half way down the leg. But its chief characteristic, is a great hunch extending from the rump to the neck. The second, or mountain dog, is small, yet so fierce that it attacks the deer, and sometimes kills them. Its hair and tail are long, body black, but the head, neck, and breast are white. The third is the largest, the body being sometimes four feet in length. Its face is like the dog, but its tusks like the wolf; its ears erect, neck large, and tail long. It is totally destitute of hair, except upon the snout, where it has some thick crooked bristles. Its whole body is covered with a smooth, soft, ash coloured skin, spotted with black and tawny. These three species are almost extinct.

The *ocotochtli*, is a species of the wild cat.

The *cojopollin*, is of the size of a common mouse; but its tail, which it uses as a hand, is thicker. Its snout, and ears, are similar in shape, to those of the pig; the ears are transparent; the legs and feet white; and the belly of a whitish yel-

low. It lives, and brings up its young in trees. When the young are alarmed, they cling closely to the mother.

The *tozan*, or *tuza*, is of the bigness of the European mole; but very different otherwise. The body is well made, and seven or eight inches long. Snout, like that of the mouse, ears small and round, and tail short. The mouth is armed with very strong teeth, and the paws with strong crooked nails, with which it digs its habitation in the earth. It is destructive to the fields by stealing the corn, and to highways by the number of holes it makes in them. In digging, it puts the earth into two membranes, like purses, under its ears, which are furnished with muscles necessary for contraction, or distension. When these vessels are full, it empties them, by striking the bottom of the membranes with its claws.

The *ahuitzotl*, is amphibious, and dwells principally in the rivers of warm countries. Its body is a foot long, snout long and sharp, and tail large. Its skin is of a mixed black and brown colour.

The *huitzlacuatzin*, is the hedge hog, or porcupine of Mexico. It is as large as a middling sized dog, which it resembles in the face, although its muzzle is flat. Its feet and legs are rather gross, and its tail in proportion with its body. It is armed all over, except the belly, the hinder part of the tail, and inside of the legs, with quills, or spines, which are empty, sharp, and a span long. On the snout and forehead, it has long straight bristles, which rise upon its head like a plume. All its skin, even between the spines, is covered with a soft black hair. It feeds on fruits only.

Besides these quadrupeds, there were others in the Mexican empire, which may be common to other parts of America, as the *itzcuincuani*, or dog



eater; the *tlalocelotl*, or little tiger, and the *tlalmiztli*, or little lion.

V. The prodigious variety, and number of birds in Mexico, have occasioned some authors to remark that as Africa is the country of beasts, so is Mexico, that, of birds. The naturalist Hernandez, has collected, and described, above two hundred species, and yet, omits many worthy of notice. The most that we can attempt, will be, to run over some classes of them, and point out such peculiarities as may appear worthy of attention.

1. Among the birds of prey, there are several species of the eagle, kestrels, gosshawks, falcons, and sparrowhawks. Birds of this class, are generally admitted to possess a superiority over those of Europe: and the excellence of the Mexican falcons was so remarkable, that by the desire of Phillip the Second, a hundred were every year sent to Spain. The largest, the most beautiful, and the most valuable among the eagles, is the *itzquauhtli*, which pursues not only the larger birds and hares, but will even attack men and beasts. There are two kinds of kestrel; that called *cenotzqui*, is particularly beautiful.

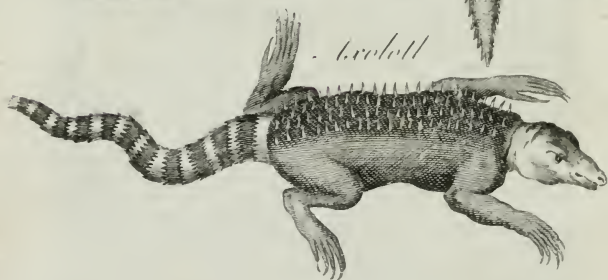
The ravens called *cacalotl*, are not in Mexico as in other countries, the scavengers of the fields; they pursue a more cleanly, but less honest employment, in robbing the corn fields. The business of removing carrion, is reserved for the *zopilots*, known in South America, by the name of *gallinazzi*, in other places by that of *aure*, and sometimes called, very improperly, by that of ravens. There are two very different species of these birds; the *zopilote*, properly so called, and the *cozcaquauhtli*; both are bigger than the raven. They resemble each other, in the hooked bill and crooked claws, and by having on their head, instead of feathers, a wrinkled membrane with some curling





King of the Tapilets

Tepajarin



Arrolott

Amolin



Uchione



Amphistean



hairs. They fly so high, as to be frequently lost to the eye, and discover their prey, by the acuteness of their sight and smell, upon which they descend in a majestic flight, in a grand spiral course. They are both almost mute. The two species are distinguished by their size, their colour, and some other peculiarities. The zopilotes, properly so called, have black feathers, with brown head, bill, and feet, go often in flocks and roost together upon trees. They are very numerous in all the various climates; while the *cozcaquauhtli*, is rare and peculiar to the warmer climates. The latter bird is larger than the zopilote, has red head and feet; beak deep red, except towards the extremity which is white. The feathers are brown except on the neck, and parts about the breast, which are of a reddish black. The wings are of an ash colour upon the inside, and upon the outside, variegated black and tawny. This bird is called by the Mexicans, the king of the zolipotes, and they say, that when these two species meet together, about the same carrion, the zopilote does not touch it until the *cozcaquauhtli* has tasted it. The zopilote is a most useful bird to the country; for it not only clears the field of carrion, but it attends the crocodiles, and destroys the eggs which they leave in the sand, to be hatched by the heat of the sun. The destruction of such a bird should be prohibited under severe penalties.

There is however, another bird to which the title of king of the zopilotes is given. This modern monarch is as large as a common eagle, with a stately air, strong claws; fine piercing eyes, and a beautiful black, white and tawny plumage; and remarkable, particularly, for a certain scarlet coloured fleshy substance, which surrounds its neck like a collar, and comes over its head in the form of a small crown. This king of birds, in his crown and

gorget, has the insignia of power, and if they indicate the right to reign, it is much to be regretted that nature had not set these distinguishing marks upon men, who arrogate to themselves the obedience of others.

2. Among the night birds, are several kinds of owls, to which we may add bats, though not properly birds. Of this equivocal animal, there are numbers, in the warm and woody countries; some of them will draw blood, with dreadful bites from horses and other animals. In some of the very hot countries, they are found of a prodigious size; but not so large as those of the Phillipine isles, and other parts of the east.

3. Under the title of aquatic birds, we shall comprehend not only the *palmydes*, which swim and live generally in the water, but the *hemantopodes* also, or such as live chiefly on the shore, and get their food by fishing. There is a prodigious number of birds of this kind, including geese, at least twenty species of ducks, several kinds of herons and egrets, vast numbers of swans, gulls, water rails, divers, king's fishers, and others. The ducks sometimes cover the fields in immense clouds. Among the herons and egrets, some are ash coloured, some white, others, with the plumage white, and the neck, the tips and upper part of the wings, and a part of the tail, enlivened with a bright scarlet, or beautiful blue.

The pelican, or *onocrontalus*, called by the Spaniards of Mexico, *alcatraz*, is sufficiently known by the great pouch which is under its bill. There are two species of this bird here, one having a smooth bill, the other a notched one. The circumstance of these birds assisting the sick, and wounded of their species, is a peculiar and affecting one; of which the Americans sometimes take advantage to procure fish without trouble. They break the

wing of a living pelican, and after tying the bird to a tree, conceal themselves in the neighbourhood; where they watch the coming of other pelicans with provisions, and when these throw up the fish from the pouch, they run in and carry it off, leaving however a portion for the captive bird.

If the pelican be admirable for its beneficence, the *yoalquachilli*, is not less wonderful, for the arms with which the Creator has supplied it. This is a small aquatic bird, with a long narrow neck, a small head, a long yellow bill, long legs, feet and claws, and a short tail. The legs and feet, are ash coloured; the body is black, with some yellow feathers about the belly. Upon its head it has a little circle, or coronet of a horny substance, which is divided into three very sharp points; and it has two others on the forepart of the wings.

Of the other classes of birds, some are valuable, upon account of their flesh, some for their plumage, and some for their song, whilst others engage our attention, by their extraordinary instinct, or other remarkable quality.

4. Of the birds which afford wholesome, and agreeable food. Clavigero says, that he has counted more than seventy species. Besides the common fowls, brought to Mexico by way of the Canary islands and the Antilles, she has the more valuable turkey, which has repaid to Europe her gift. These birds are abundant, wild and tame. There are partridges, quails, pheasants, cranes, turtle doves, pigeons, and a great variety of others, esteemed in Europe, and America. The pheasants differ from those of Europe, and are of three kinds. The *coxolitti*, and the *tepetototl*, which are both of the size of the goose, with a crest upon their heads, which they can raise and depress at pleasure, are distinguished by their colour, and some particular qualities. The first, sometimes called the royal

pheasant, has a tawny coloured plumage, and its flesh is more delicate than that of the other. The tepetototl, may be so tamed, as to pick from its master's hand; to run to meet him with signs of joy; to learn to shut the door with its bill; and shows in other respects much docility. The third species, called *gritones*, or screamers, are smaller than either of the preceding; have a brown body, and black tail and wings. The *chachalaca*, the flesh of which is excellent, is about the size of the common fowl. The upper part of the body is of a brown colour, the under whiteish, and the bill and feet blueish. It is inconceivable what a noise these birds make in the woods with their cries, which, somewhat resemble the cackling of fowls, but are much louder, more constant, and more disagreeable. Of the turtle doves, and pigeons, some are peculiar to these countries.

5. The author last above cited says, that of the birds valuable for their plumage, he has reckoned five and thirty species that are superlatively beautiful. At the head of this class, he justly places the huitzitzilin, or the humming bird, which is equally admired in every part of the torrid and temperate zones of America.\* He says also, that there are nine species of this beautiful creature, and that like dormice, swallows, and bats, they continue in some cold countries in a state of torpidity, from

\* See the preceding vol. p. 203.

In a report lately made (1831,) to the Royal Geographical Society, (England,) captain King, says, that the parrots and humming birds, generally the inhabitants of warm regions, are numerous in the southern and western parts of the strait of Magalhães. They were even observed on the wing during a snow shower; and after a constant succession of rain, snow, and sleet; the latter have been seen sipping the sweets of fuschia and other flowers, while the thermometer was at the freezing point.



October till April. A circumstance which we believe, is not generally known.

Among the aquatic birds, there were several much distinguished by the beauty of their plumage. The *tlauhquechol* or flamingo; the *hepapantotl*, a species of the wild duck, clothed in all the colours of the rainbow; the *tlacuiloltotl*, or painted bird, whose feathers are variegated with red, blue, purple, green, and black, with its black eye, and yellow iris, and ash coloured feet; the *tlauh-totl*, similar in plumage, but inferior in size; the *tzinizcan*, of the size of the pigeon, with a small crooked, yellow bill, the head and neck adorned with shining green feathers, the breast and belly white, except near the tail, where it is variegated with blue, the tail green on the upper, and black on the lower side, the wings black and white; the eyes black, with reddish-yellow irides; the *mezcanauhtli*, a wild duck, about as large as the domestic fowl, but of singular beauty, having the bill long and broad, azure above, and black beneath, body white, dotted with numerous black spots, wings white and brown on the in, and variegated with black, white, blue, green, and tawny colour, on the outside, head brown, tawny coloured and purple, with a beautiful white spot betwixt the eyes and bill, eyes black, feet yellowish-red, and tail blue above, brown below, and white at its extremity; all these beautiful birds, together with the *Fuacamaye*, and the cardinals, so much prized by the Europeans, were much used by the Mexicans, in forming their singular works of mosaic, which we shall notice hereafter.

6. Many authors who have been constrained to allow to the birds of America, a superiority in the beauty of their plumage, have denied them the excellence of song. But this denial is unjust, and unsupported by fact.

There are in Mexico, as in Europe, goldfinches, and nightingales, and at least, two and twenty other species of singing birds, which are not inferior to these; yet all are surpassed by the *centzontli*, the pollyglotta, the many voiced mocking bird, so well known throughout America, and so highly estimated wherever known. It has a rich and harmonious note, proper to itself, but it is so profuse in its acquired ones, that it is difficult to detect or recognize that which is truly its own. It counterfeits not only the tones of other birds, but the different cries of quadrupeds. And the listener unaware of this faculty, would suppose the grove to be alive with an hundred different songsters. It is the size of the common thrush; has the body white on the under side, and grey above, with some white feathers, especially about the head and tail. It eats any thing, but delights chiefly in flies, which it will peck from the finger with signs of pleasure.

The birds called cardinals, are not less delightful to the ear, from the sweetness of their song, than to the sight, by the beauty of their scarlet plumage and crest. The Mexican calandra, sings very sweetly also, and its song resembles that of the nightingale. Its feathers are varied with white, yellow, and grey. It weaves its nest in a wonderful manner, with hairs, fastened together with some kind of viscid substance, and suspended like a bag from the bough of a tree. The *tigrillo*, or little tiger, which is also valuable for its music, is so named, from its feathers being spotted like the skin of the tiger. The *cuillaccochi*; resembles the *centzontli* in the excellence of its song, as well as in size and colour, as the *coztotl* exactly does the canary bird. The *gorriones* or Mexican sparrows, are like the European, except in size, particularly in their manner of hopping, and in making their nests in the holes of walls. The body is white on

the under and grey upon the upper side; but at a certain age, the heads of some become red, and others yellow. Their flight is laborious, from the smallness of their wings, or the weakness of their feathers. Their song is delightful and various. They frequent the capital and the other cities and villages of Mexico.

The talking birds too, or those which imitate the human voice, are alike abundant in the country of Anahuac. Even among the singing birds, there are some which learn a few words, as the mocking bird, and the *acolchichi*, or bird with the red back, which, from that mark, the Spaniards have called the commendador. The *cehuan* which is bigger than the thrush, counterfeits the human voice, in a tone that seems burlesqued; and will follow travellers a great way. The *tzanahuei*, resembles the magpie in size, but is of a different colour. It learns to speak, steals cunningly whatever it can get, and in every respect, shows a kind of instinct superior to that class of birds generally.

But of all the talking birds the parrot holds the first place; they reckon in Mexico, four principal species, the *huacamaya*, the *toznenetl*, the *cochotl*, and the *quiltototl*. The first, is more valuable for its plumage, than its talent of speaking. It is the largest of all parrots. The *toznenetl*, the most admirable for strength of memory, and distinctness of articulation, is about the size of a pigeon. Its feathers are of a green colour, except on the head, and forepart of the wings, which in some are red, and in others yellow. It learns any words or tune, and imitates them faithfully. There are three species of the *cochotl*, differing from each other in size and plumage, which in all, is beautiful, and the prevailing colour is green. The greatest, is nearly as large as the *toznenetl*; the two other species, called by

the Spaniards, *caterine*, are smaller. They all speak, but not well. The *quiltotoll* is the smallest kind of parrot, and speaks but little. These small parrots, whose plumage is of a most beautiful green, fly always in large flocks, sometimes making a great noise in the air, and at others, committing havoc among the grain. When perched upon the trees, they can scarce be distinguished by their colour from the leaves. The other parrots generally go in pairs.

8. The *madrugadores*, or twilight birds, are not distinguished by beauty or song; but are remarkable for their lateness in retiring to roost at night, and their early waking in the morning, they never cease to sing and frolic, till an hour after sunset; begin again long before dawn, and never seem so happy as during the morning, and evening twilight. About an hour before the break of day, one of them begins from the bough of a tree, where he has passed the night along with others of his species, to call them, with a shrill, clear note, which he repeats with a tone of gladness, till some of his companions hear and answer him. When they all awake, they make a very cheerful noise, which may be heard at a distance. These birds are about as large as sparrows.

The *tzacuas*, resembling the last bird in size, colour and form of their nest, are still more curious. They live in society; and every tree is to them a village, composed of a great number of nests, all hanging from the boughs. One of them who performs the office of chief, or guard of the village, resides in the middle of the tree; from which it flies about from one nest to another, visiting them all, and after singing a little while, returns to its place, while the rest remain totally silent. If any bird of different species approach the tree, he flies to it, and endeavours with his bill and wings,

to drive it off; but if a man, or other large animal comes near, he flies screaming to another tree; and if at such time any tzacuas belonging to the village be returning from the fields, he meets them, and changing his note, obliges them to retire; but as soon as he perceives the danger over, he returns happy to his wonted round of visiting the nests.

VI. The reptiles of Mexico, may be reduced to two classes, the four footed, and the apodes, or those without feet. To the first, belong crocodiles, lizards, frogs, and toads; to the second, all kinds of serpents. It is unnecessary to speak of the crocodile or aligator, or of the frogs and toads, or to add to what we have already said of the lizards of the islands,\* those of Mexico, being chiefly of the same species.

I. The serpents of Mexico, are very numerous and various, of different sizes and colours; some poisonous, and others innoxious.

The largest, seems to have been that called by the Mexicans, *canauhcoatl*. It was about three Parisian perches long, and of the thickness of a man. And Hernandez saw in the mountains of Tepoztlan, one of the *tlilcoas*, or black serpents, sixteen Parisian feet in length. But such monstrous serpents are now rarely seen, unless in some wood, distant from the towns.

The most remarkable of the poisonous serpents, are the *ahueyactli*, the *cuicuilcoatl*, the *teixminani*, the *centcoatl*, and the *teotlacozauiqui*. The last is the rattle snake, so common and well known throughout North America. The *ahueyactli*, differs from the rattle snake only in wanting the rattle; and in the effect of its poison, which causes the blood to burst from the mouth, nose, and eyes, of the person who has received it.

\* See preceding vol. p. 194.



The *cuicuicoatl*, so named from the variety of its colours, is not quite eight inches long, and of the thickness of the little finger; but its poison is as active as that of the rattle snake.

The *teixminani*, is that kind of serpent which Pliny calls *jaculum*. (*dart*.) It is of a long slender form, with a grey coloured back, and purple belly. It moves always in a straight line, and never coils, but springs from the trees upon passengers, and has thence derived its name. The Mexicans, call it *micoatl*, the Spaniards, *sætilla*, both signifying the same thing with the *jaculum*, of the Latins. These snakes are found in the mountains of *Quauhnahuac*, and in other hot countries. But instances of their attacking travellers are very rare.

The *cencoatl*, or poisonous snake, is about five feet long, and about eight inches round at the thickest part. Its most remarkable quality, is its shining in the dark.

Among the harmless snakes, of which there are several kinds, the *tzacatlinan*, and the *maquizcoatl*, are most noted. The former is very beautiful, about a foot in length, and of the thickness of the little finger. It lives always in ant hills, upon the inhabitants of which it is supposed to feed. The *maquizcoatl*, is about the same size, but of a shining silvery hue. The tail is thicker than the head, and it can move progressively with either extremity at pleasure. This species is called by the Greeks, *amphisbæna*; it is very rare, and found in Mexico, only in the valley of Toluca.

It is believed, that none of the snakes of the country, are vivaparous, except the water snake. That is about twenty inches long, and one thick; its teeth are exceedingly small, the upper



part of the head is black, the sides of it blue, and the under part yellow. The back is striped with blue and black, the belly is entirely blue.

The ancient Mexicans, who delighted to rear all kinds of animals, and who, by long familiarity, had lost that horror which such naturally inspire, used to catch in the fields a little, green, harmless snake, which being brought up at home, and well fed, would sometimes grow to the size of a man. It was generally kept in a tub, which it never left, but to receive food from its master's hand; this it would take either mounted on his shoulder, or coiled about his legs.

VII. Of the fish of Mexico, we shall describe such only as are found in the rivers, and which from some peculiarity are worthy of notice. The abundance of fish on the sea coasts and rivers, is such, that Clavigero assures us, he has counted more than a hundred species, which serve for the nourishment of man, without reckoning the turtle, crab, lobster, or other testaceous or crustaceous animal.

Among the eels, there is a species called *huitzilmichin*, by the Mexicans; about three feet long, and very slender. Its body is covered with small plates, instead of scales. The snout is about eight inches in length, with the upper jaw longer than the lower, differing in this respect from all other eels, which it likewise surpasses in the delicacy of its flesh.

The bobo, is a very fine fish, about two feet long and four or six inches broad, and is esteemed excellent food. The river barbel, called bagre, is of the same size with the bobo, and of exquisite flavour, but unwholesome, until it is cleansed, with lemon juice, or other acid, from a certain kind of froth or viscid liquor, which adheres to it. The

*bobos*, are taken in the rivers falling into the Mexican gulph; and the barbels in those which discharge themselves into lakes, or into the Pacific Ocean. The flesh of these two kinds, although very delicate, does not equal that of the *pampano*, and *colombella*, which are deservedly esteemed superior to all others.

The *iztacmichin*, or white fish, has always been of great repute in Mexico, and is now as common at the Spanish tables, as it used to be at those of the ancient Mexicans. There are three or four species. The *amilotl*, the largest and most esteemed, is more than a foot in length, has two fins on the back, two at the sides, and one under the belly. The *xalmichin* differs from the former only in size. The *jacapitzahuac*, is the smallest kind, and not more than eight inches long, and one inch and a half broad. All have scales, and abound in the lakes of Chalco, Pazcuaco, and Chapalla. The fourth is the *xalmichin* of *Quauhnhuac*, which has no scales but is covered with a tender white skin.

The *axolotl*, or axolote, is a great water lizard of the Mexican lake. Its figure is ridiculous and disagreeable. It is commonly about eight inches long, but is sometimes to be found about twice that length, the skin is soft and black, the head and tail long, the mouth large, and the tongue broad, thin, and cartilaginous. The body gradually diminishes in size, from the middle to the extremity of the tail. It swims with the four feet, which resemble those of the frog. But the most remarkable circumstance with respect to this animal, established by many observations, is the uterus, and a periodical evacuation of blood, to which it is subject; in both which it is said to resemble the human species. The *axolotl*, is

wholesome to eat, and is much of the same taste as an eel.\*

VIII. Among the insects the *cuzcuya*, holds a shining place. But we have already described it correctly, in our preceding volume.

There are at least six different kinds of bees. The first, is the same with the common bee of Europe, with which it agrees, not only in size, shape, and colour, but also in its disposition and manners, and in the quality of its honey and wax. The second species, which differs from the first, only in having no sting, is the bee of Yucatan and Chiopa, which makes the fine clear honey of Estabentun, of an aromatic flavour, superior to all other kinds. This honey is taken six times a year, in every other month; but the best is obtained in November, being made from a fragrant white flower like jessamine, which blows in September, called in that country, estabentun, from which the honey has derived its name. The third species, resembles the winged ants, is smaller than the common bee, and without sting. This insect which is peculiar to warm and temperate climates, forms nests in size and shape, resembling sugar loaves, and even sometimes greatly exceeding these in size, which hang from rocks or from trees, and particularly from the oak. The populousness of these hives, is much greater than those of the common bee. The nymphs, which are eatable, are white and round, like a pearl. The honey is of a greyish colour, but of a fine flavor. The fourth species, is a yellow bee, smaller than the common one, but like it, furnished with a sting; its honey is inferior in quality. The fifth, is a small bee without a sting, which constructs hives of an

\* Of this *problematical* reptile, as M. de Humboldt denominates it, he sent several individuals to Europe. M. Cuvier, thinks it the nympha, of an unknown salamander. M. Dumeril, a new species of proteus. 2 Humboldt's New Mexico, lib. 3. c. 8.

orbicular form, in subterraneous cavities, and the honey is sour, and somewhat bitter.

Among the flies, there are some luminous as the glow worm. The *axayacatl*, is a marsh fly, of the Mexican lake, the eggs of which being deposited in immense quantities, upon the rushes and corn fields of the lake, form large masses, which are carried by the fishermen, to the market for sale. This caviare, called *ahuauhtli*, which has much the same taste as the caviare of fish, was eaten by the Mexicans, and is a common dish among the Spaniards. The Mexicans ate not only the eggs, but the flies themselves, made up together in a mass, and prepared with salt-petre.

In the hot countries, particularly in those next the sea, *cucarachas*, which the people of the United States have corrupted into *cockroaches*, are found in great numbers. And perhaps the tidy housewife may reconcile herself to the presence of this disgusting insect, by learning that it is useful in clearing the house of bugs. It has been remarked, that ships that come from Europe, infested with bugs, return from New Spain quite freed of these stinking insects, by means of the *cucarachas*.

Locusts too, are occasionally abundant, and very destructive. Among other insects, we may add curious worms, of several kinds, scolopendræ, scorpions, spiders, ants, nigua, chegoes, or jiggers, and the cochineal.

Of the worms, we may notice the *tleocuilin*, or burning worm, which has qualities similar to those of the cantharides; its head is red, the breast green, and the rest of the body of a tawny colour; the *temohuani*, a worm covered with yellow venomous prickles; and species of silk worm, that produces silk of an excellent quality, very white, soft, and strong, which is often found upon trees, in the woods, on the sea coasts, particularly in those

years when there is little rain. The common silk worm has been brought from Spain, and succeeds very well, but the jealousy of the mother country prohibited its culture.

The scolopendræ, are sometimes found in the temperate, but more frequently in the warm, and moist districts. Hernandez says, that he has seen them of the length of two feet, and two inches thick; but such monstrous insects are very rare.

Scorpions, are common throughout the whole country; but in the cold and temperate regions, are neither numerous nor hurtful. They abound in those places where the air is very hot, or very dry; and their poison is so active as to kill children, and to occasion terrible pain to adults. The poison of the small yellowish scorpion, is more powerful than that of the large brown one, and their sting is most dangerous during those hours of the day, when the sun gives most heat.

Of the variety of spiders, the *tarantula*, and *casampulga*, are most worthy of notice. The name tarantula, is given very improperly, in that country, to a very large spider, the back and legs of which, are covered with a fine soft blackish down, like that upon young chickens. It is peculiar to the hot countries, and is found in houses as well as in fields. It is supposed to be poisonous; and it is generally, and we presume erroneously believed, that if a horse tramples upon one, he soon loses his hoof. The *casampulga*, is a small spider, of the size of a chick pea, with short legs, and red belly. It is common and venomous.

The most curious ants, are the red, called *bravas*, or fierce, which inflict painful wounds, with their stings; the large brown ants, called *harrieras*, or carriers, because they are continually employed in carrying grain for their provision, and are very destructive to the harvest, black lines of which are fre-



quently seen upon the earth, in incessant motion; and a singular ant in Michuacan, larger than the common ant, with a greyish coloured body, and black head. Upon its hinder parts, it carries a small bag, full of a very sweet liquor, which the children are fond of, and imagine it honey.

The *nigua* or Chegoe, called in other countries *pique*, is an exceeding small insect, which fixes upon the human feet, and insensibly breaks the cuticle, and nestles between that and the true skin; and unless taken out, pierces to the flesh, where it multiplies with a rapidity almost incredible. It is seldom discovered, until it pierces the true skin, when it causes an intolerable itching. These insects with their astonishing multiplication, would soon dispeople these countries, were it less easy to avoid them, or were the inhabitants less dexterous in removing them from their persons. The poor, however, suffer these insects sometimes to multiply, so far, as to make large holes in their flesh, and even to occasion dangerous wounds.

The celebrated cochineal of Mexico, so well known and highly esteemed over the world, for the beauty of the colour it affords, is an insect, the most useful which Anahuac produces. Particular pains have always been taken to rear it, from the times of the Mexican kings; but the country in which it thrives best, is Mixteca, where it is the principal branch of commerce. At its utmost growth, it resembles in size and figure, a bug. The female is ill proportioned, and sluggish. The eyes, mouth, antennæ, and feet, are so concealed among the wrinkles of its skin, that they cannot be discovered without the assistance of a microscope; from which circumstance it has been mistaken for a seed, instead of an animal. The males, are smaller and thinner than the females, and are not so



numerous, but are more brisk and active. Upon the head of the insect are two articulated antennæ, in each articulation of which, are four small bristles, regularly disposed. It has six feet, each consisting of three parts. From the hinder part of the body, grow out two hairs, which are two or three times as large as the whole insect. The male has two large wings, which are wanting on the female. The internal colour of the insect, is a deep red, darker in the female; and the external, pale red. In the wild cochineal, the internal colour is still darker, and the external whitish, or ash. The cochineal is reared upon a species of the nopal, opuntia, or Indian fig, which grows to the height of about eight feet, and bears fruit like the fig of other opuntias, but not edible. It feeds on the leaves of this plant, where it passes through all the stages of its growth, and at length produces a numerous offspring.\*

Among the water insects, the *atetepitz*, is a marsh beetle, resembling in shape and size the beetles that fly. It has four feet, and is covered with a hard shell. The *atopinan*, is a marsh grasshopper, of a dark colour, about six inches long and two broad. The *ahuihuitla*, is a worm of the Mexican lake, four inches long, and of the thickness of a goosequill; of a tawny colour upon the upper part of the body, and white upon the under part. It stings with its tail, which is hard, and poisonous. The *ocuiliztac*, is a black marsh

\* D. Ant Ulloa, says, that the nopal, upon which the cochineal is reared, has no prickles; but, M. Clavigero observes, that in Mixteca, where he resided five years, he always saw it on prickly nopals. M. Raynal, imagines, that the colour of the cochineal, is to be ascribed to the red fig, on which it lives. He is mistaken, since, the nopal on which it feeds, bears white figs, and the insect feeds on the leaves, not on the fruit. It may be reared upon the species with a red fig, but that is not its proper plant.

worm, which becomes white when roasted. All these insects were eaten by the ancient Mexicans.

The names alone, of the insects of this country would fill an immense catalogue, which cannot have place in a work like the present. We shall therefore close this short account, by noticing a kind of zoophytes, or animal plant mentioned by M. Clavigero. This was three or four inches long, and had four very slender feet, and two antennæ, but the body was nothing more than the fibres of the leaves, of the same shape, size, and colour, with those of the other leaves of the tree, upon which the insect was found.

To pass at once from the lowest to the highest order of animal life, we shall close this physical sketch, by a description of the bodily and mental qualities of the race of men, which dwelt in Anahuac.

It has been correctly observed,\* that we cannot do justice to this race by painting it in the state of degradation and misery, to which it was reduced by Spanish policy; that we must go back to the period, when governed by its own laws, it could display its proper energy; and that we must read its character in the hieroglyphical paintings, buildings of hewn stone, and works of sculpture, still in preservation, which, though they attest the infancy of the arts, have a striking analogy to monuments of the most civilized people.

The Indians of new Spain, bear a general resemblance to those of Canada, Florida, Peru, and Brazil. They have the same swarthy, and copper colour, flat and smooth hair, small beard, squat body, long eye, with the corner directed upwards, towards the temples, prominent cheek bones, thick lips, and an expression of gentleness in the mouth,

\* Humboldt, b. 2. c. 6.

strongly contrasted with a gloomy and severe look. In surveying a million and a half of square leagues, from Terra del Fuego to Bhering's straits, we are struck with a general resemblance in the features of the inhabitants, and are disposed to infer that they have all descended from the same stock, notwithstanding the great diversity of language which separates them. But this analogy of form has been much exaggerated by the Europeans, who have visited the western continent.

The Mexicans are more swarthy than the inhabitants of the warmest climates of South America, or the tribes north of the river Gila. They have also more beard than the indigenes of South America; and many of the Indians, in the vicinity of the capital, wear small mustachios, which were a mark of their tributary cast. In a less advanced stage of physiology, a paucity of beard was deemed a sure indication of degeneracy, and feebleness of the human race.\* But, with the increase of knowledge, this error has vanished. A diminutive quantity of beard is by no means peculiar to the American races. Many hordes of eastern Asia, and several tribes of negroes, have so little beard, that its existence is scarce perceptible. And no stronger proof of the falsity of the hypothesis assumed by European historians on this subject, need be adduced, than the inspection of the negroes of Congo, and the Caribs, two eminently robust races, frequently of colossal stature.

The stature of the Mexicans, is generally above the common size; their limbs well proportioned; and as is generally the case with native Americans, they are very free from deformity. If their appearance be not prepossessing it is not revolting. Among their young women, were many very fair

\* De Pauw, Dr. Robertson, and others.

and attractive, whose beauty was heightened by the winning sweetness of their address, and the modesty of their deportment. The freedom from deformity which the Indians enjoy, is ascribed to the "great simplicity in which their ancestors lived for thousands of years."\* It might perhaps be more justly attributed, to the active nature of their pursuits, their habit of dwelling much in the open air, and particularly to the liberty which their infants enjoyed from their birth, unchecked by bandages, or cumbrous garments. "I have never," says Humboldt, "seen a hunchbacked Indian, and it is extremely rare to see any one squint, or lame of the arm or leg." Dr. Robertson, after M. De Pauw, in the spirit of vilification which characterize their writings in America, ascribes this freedom from deformity, to the practice of putting to death all children defectively framed; and he adds "that in those provinces of the new world, where, by the establishment of the Europeans, more regular provision has been made for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and they are restrained from laying violent hands upon their children, the Americans are so far from being eminent for any superior perfection in their form, that one should rather suspect some peculiar imbecility in the race, from the extraordinary number of individuals, who are deformed, dwarfish, mutilated, blind, or deaf.†"

\* Humboldt, N. S. book 2. ch. 6.

† 1 Robt. Am. b. 4. s. 41.

This is one, among many of the general propositions, which Dr. Robertson has asserted, founded on a particular instance, and special locality. His authority, for this comprehensive assertion, is a single passage in the voyage of Ulloa, relating to the Indians, in the town of Quito, for whose diseases and infirmities, the vices they have acquired, and the treatment they endure, are more than sufficient causes. Had there been a disposition to treat the subject fairly, the same book affords ample means to establish the fact, that the Indians not exposed to these causes of debility, are uncommonly robust, and well formed. (B. v. c. 5.)

But unfortunately for this hypothesis, the crime of infanticide was not practised at Mexico, and in all the countries of Anahuac, which make one fourth of the new world, the Indians lived in societies, where regular provision had for ages been made for their subsistence. M. de Humboldt, had in view the foregoing passage of Dr. Robertson, whilst making the following remark. "When we examine savage hunters, or warriors, we are tempted to believe that they are well made because those who have any natural deformity either perish from fatigue, or are exposed by their parents: But the Mexican and Peruvian Indians, those of *Quito*, and new Granada, are agriculturists, who can only be compared with the class of European peasantry. We can have no doubt then, that the absence of natural deformities among them, is the effect of their mode of life, and of the constitution peculiar to their race. All men of very swarthy complexion, those of Mongol and American origin, and especially the negroes, participate in the same advantage. We are inclined to believe, that the Arab European race, possesses a greater flexibility of organization, and that it is more easily modified by exterior causes, such as aliment, climate, and habit, and consequently has a greater tendency to deviate from its original model." This latter remark, is a return of the ball, with no inconsiderable force. Upon its truth we will not pronounce. But we will observe, that the descendants of the Arab European race in America, where they enjoy freedom, plenty and good morals, are scarce less perfect in their forms, than were the aboriginal inhabitants.

The exterior form of those inhabitants, confirms the analogy between the American and Mongol race. This analogy is most evident, in the colour of the skin and hair, in the defective beard, high cheek bones, and the direction of the eyes. But



the resemblance of some features does not constitute identity of race. If the hieroglyphic paintings, and the traditions of the inhabitants of Anahuac, indicate that wandering tribes spread from the north-west, towards the south, we are not warranted thereby to conclude that all the Indians of the new continent are of Asiatic origin. In fact, osteology teaches us, that the cranium of the American differs essentially from that of the Mongol. The former exhibits a facial line more inclined, though straighter than that of the negro; and there is no race on the globe, in which the frontal bone is more depressed backward, or which has a less projecting forehead.\* The cheek bones of the Americans, are almost as prominent as those of the Mongols; but the contours are more rounded, and the angles not so sharp. The under jaw is larger than that of the negro, and its branches are less dispersed than those of the Mongol. The *occipital* bone, is less curved, and the protuberances which correspond to the *cerebellum*, so important in the system of M. Galt, are scarcely sensible. Perhaps, the race comprehended under the name of American Indians, is a mixture of Asiatic tribes, and the Aborigines of this continent; and the enor-

\* This extraordinary flatness, is found among nations to whom the means of producing artificial deformity are unknown, as is proven by the *crania* of Mexican Indians, Peruvians and Aures, lodged in the museum of Natural History, at Paris, by M. M. de Humboldt, and Bonpland. M. de Humboldt thinks, that the barbarous custom prevalent among some savage tribes, of pressing the heads of children between two boards, had its origin in such a form of the frontal bone. The negroes give preference to the thickest, and most prominent lips; the Calmucks to turned up noses; and the Greeks in their heroic statues, have raised the facial line, above that of nature, from 85° to 100°. (Cuvier, *Anat. Compare*, t. ii. p. 6.) The Astecs, who never disfigure the heads of their children, represent their principal divinities with a head much more flattened than any among the Charibs. Humboldt's N. S. book 2. c. 6.



mous aquiline noses, observed in the Mexican paintings, may have pertained to the physiognomy of tribes now extinct. The Canadian Indians, call themselves, *Metoktheniakes*, (*born of the Sun*,) and reject the efforts of the priests to persuade them to the contrary.\*

The senses of the Mexicans are very acute, especially that of sight, which they enjoy commonly unimpaired to the greatest age. Their constitutions are sound, and their health robust. They are exempted from many disorders, usual among the Spaniards; but, as we have already remarked, of the epidemics to which their country is occasionally subject, they are the principal victims. Clavigero observes, that, they become grey headed and bald, earlier than the Spaniards. But Humboldt says, they seldom become grey; and that it is much more rare to find an Indian, than a negro with grey hairs. And he adds, that the skin of the Indian, is also less subject to wrinkles. Clavigero's representation, is supported by Ulloa, and Father Gumilla. Though most of the Indians die of acute diseases, it is not uncommon for them to attain to great age. In the temperate zone, half way up the Cordillera, they often, especially women, reach an hundred years, and this old age is generally comfortable, for they preserve their muscular strength until the last.†

\* Humboldt's N. S. book 2. ch. 6.

† Humboldt relates, that while he was at Lima, the Indian Hilario Pari, died at the village of Chiguala, four leagues distant from the town of Arequipa, at the age of one hundred and forty-three years. He remained united in marriage, for ninety years, to an Indian of the name of Andrea Alar Zar, who attained the age of one hundred and seventeen. This old Peruvian, went, at the age of one hundred and thirty, from three to four leagues daily, on foot. He became blind, thirteen years before his death, and left behind him, of twelve children, but one daughter, of seventy-seven years of age. (Humboldt, N. S. b. 2. ch. 6.)

The Mexicans were temperate in eating, but their passion for fermented and distilled liquors has ever been excessive. This vice was restrained by very severe punishments, during the reign of their native sovereigns. But when Spanish policy abolished the restraining laws, one half of the people, says Clavigero, seemed to have lost their senses.

It would be as difficult as unjust, to appreciate the moral faculties of this race, from their condition under Spanish despotism. A great proportion of the higher classes of Mexico, among whom intellectual culture might be supposed, perished in the Spanish conquest. The fanaticism of the ecclesiastics was specially directed against the Aztec priests, the *teopixqui* or ministers of their religion, and all the inhabitants of the *teocallis* or holy dwellings, who were the depositaries of Mexican science. The monks industriously destroyed the hieroglyphic paintings, which contained, if we may be allowed the expression, the literature of the nation, by which every species of knowledge was transmitted from generation to generation. The people thus deprived of all means of instruction were plunged into ignorance, so much the deeper, as the missionaries, unskilled in the Mexican language, could communicate to them no new ideas. The Indian women possessed of rank and fortune allied themselves with the conquerors, that they might avoid the humiliation into which their nation had fallen. The remaining natives consisted of the most indigent classes; the serfs attached to the soil, artizans, among whom, was a great number of weavers, porters, who were mere beasts of burden, and the very dregs of the people, the crowds of beggars, who filled, in the time of Cortes, the streets of all the great cities of the Mexican empire.

Let us suppose, that a race of lettered men with

all the science of the present age, as different from the Spaniards, as the Spaniards were from the Indians, had invaded Spain, with vastly superior arms in the 15th century, and with the assistance of the subjugated and prescribed Moors, had overthrown the monarchy, pulled down the cities, destroyed the universities, colleges, and churches, burned all the libraries, pictures, and statues, and slain the scholars, the priests, and the nobles:—And then let us ask; what ideas the conquerors would have entertained of the moral powers of the Spanish nation, judging it from the remaining peasantry alone?

Although the Indian races, have been as grossly injured in their intellectual, as in their physical character by the conquerors, and modern historians, yet some of the Spanish clergy, who had full opportunities of studying their capabilities, have done them justice. Acosta, Garces, first bishop of Tlascalla, and even the overzealous Zummaraga, and many others, have borne testimony to their mental ability. But such testimony was scarce needed. When we consider, that the Mexicans had an almost exact knowledge of the duration of the year; that they intercalated at the end of their cycle of fifty-two years with more accuracy, than the Egyptians, Greeks, or Romans;\* that the Toltecs in the seventh, and the Aztecs in the twelfth century, drew geographical maps, constructed cities, highways, dykes, canals, and immense pyramids accurately designed with bases of 1400 feet; that they had a complicated feudal system, a regulated priesthood, and theocratic policy, a well organized military, and artificial, politi-

\* M. Laplace, discovered in the Mexican intercalation, that the duration of their year, is almost the identical duration found by the astronomers of Almamon, caliph of Bagdad, the distinguished son of Haroun Al Raschid.

cal, and social relations; a highly perfected pictorial writing, in which they recorded and preserved the transaction of countries; how can we deny them the merit of great intellectual cultivation?

In truth, the state of civilization of the Mexicans, at the time of the discovery of America, was superior to that of the Spaniards, when first visited by the Phæneceans; of the Gauls, when first known to the Greeks, and of the Germans, when subjected by the Romans. Notwithstanding the gross misrepresentations of inhuman avarice, which would have degraded them to beasts, that it might riot with impunity in the expenditure of their blood, the Mexicans have understandings fitted for every kind of science; and among those who have had the opportunity of engaging in literary pursuits, there have been good mathematicians, excellent architects, and learned divines. Subdued by the unquestionable evidences of their skill, European pride, has conceded to them, as to the Chinese, a great talent of imitation, yet it preposterously denies to them the praise of invention, to which their ancient history proves them to be eminently entitled.

They are slow in action, not subject to the transports of anger, or phrensies of love. But, they have an admirable perseverance, and industry in the accomplishment of any object, to which they devote themselves. They are patient of injury and hardship; and grateful when assured of kindness; but the distrust, which they with reason entertained of the motives of their oppressors, has induced the Spaniards to say proverbially, that they are alike insensible to injuries and benefits.

They were by nature taciturn, serious, and austere, and more disposed to punish crime, than to reward virtue. Generosity and disinterestedness, were prominent features of their character. They

gave freely, what cost them the greatest labour to acquire. This disregard of self, which in excess is a crime, and their dislike to the tasks imposed by their rulers, are the true reasons of that exaggerated indolence with which they have been charged; notwithstanding which, they are the chief, and almost the only labourers in the country.

The respect paid by children to their parents, and by the young to the old, was so universal, as to seem almost inherent. Parents were very fond of their children; but the affection which husbands bore to their wives, was certainly less than that of wives to their husbands; and Clavigero observes, that it was very common for the men to love their neighbours' wives, better than their own:—a fault we believe, not peculiar to husbands of the western continent.

That the Mexicans were formerly courageous, is no more to be doubted than, that political slavery, and domestic servility under the last of their kings, and under their conquerors, rendered them cowardly; nor, than, that, success in their present efforts to establish civil liberty, will qualify them to defend it.

Under the Spanish power, the Mexicans were certainly degraded, from the condition they maintained at the time of the conquest. They were then, more intrepid, more active, more energetic, and more industrious; but they were at the same time more superstitious, and more cruel.

There is great difficulty in obtaining a correct idea of the amount of the population of Anahuac. If we give full credit to the reports of the conquerors, it must indeed have been prodigious; and if we abstract largely from their enumeration, still we must admit the number of inhabitants to have been very great. In commenting on this subject, Dr. Robertson, with his fixed resolution to depreciate



every thing American, observes, that “The Spaniards, accustomed to see the natives dispersed, or in small hamlets, were astonished on entering New Spain, to find them residing in towns of such extent as resembled those of Europe. In the first fervour of their admiration, they compared Zempoalla, though a town of second or third size, to the cities of greatest note in their own country. When afterwards they visited in succession, Tlascalala, Cholula, Tacuba, Tezcucó, and Mexico itself, their amazement increased so much, that it led them to convey ideas of their magnitude and populousness, bordering on what is incredible. Even when there is leisure for observation, and no interest to deceive, conjectural estimates of the number of people in cities are extremely loose and usually much exaggerated. It is not surprizing then, that Cortes and his companions, little accustomed to such imputations, and powerfully tempted to magnify, in order to exalt the merit of their own discoveries and conquest, should have been betrayed into this common error, and have raised their descriptions considerably above truth. For this reason, some considerable abatement ought to be made from their calculations of the number of inhabitants in the Mexican cities, and we may fix the standard of their population, much lower than they have done; but still they will appear to have been cities of such consequence, as are not to be found but among people who have made some considerable progress on the arts of life.”\*

There are several important objections to this view of the distinguished historian. It has been asserted, and we believe correctly, that military commanders, accustomed to form estimates of the numbers in large masses of men, by a *coup d’œil*,

\* Robert, Am. B. 7. s. 9.



acquire a wonderful tact, and make admirable approximations to truth in their conjectures. If this be true, Cortes and his companions, are the best authorities, short of an actual census upon such a subject. And if they were tempted by vanity to exaggerate the number of their opponents, they had a like inducement to diminish the number of their allies. But as their reports of the numbers of both, are subject to the same charge of extravagance, we may presume, they did not err from this cause. Nor did they make their reports in the "*first fervour of their admiration.*" Cortes' first letter to Charles V. was written eighteen months after his arrival in Mexico; the Anonymous Conqueror, wrote some years after the conquest, and Bernal Diaz, after a residence of forty years in the country. Nor, are the military officers the only persons, who have declared the extraordinary population of Mexico.

The Vale of Mexico, was at least as well peopled as the most populous countries of Europe. It contained forty considerable cities, besides many villages and hamlets. Cortes affirms, that the city of Mexico was as large as Seville and Cordova; Surius citing certain records, in the royal archives of Spain, says, that it contained one hundred and thirty thousand houses. Torquemada following Sahagun, and other Indian historians, reckons one hundred and twenty thousand, and adds, that each house had from four to ten inhabitants. The Anonymous Conqueror, writes, "this city of Temistitlan, may be about two leagues and a half, or three leagues more or less, in circumference; the greater part of those who have seen it, judge that there are upwards of sixty thousand fires\* in

\* Dr. Robertson, in citing this author, (from *Ramusio*, iii. 309. A.) says, 60,000 people!! And he reproves Gomara, for having adopted the version of 60,000 houses, which is that given

it, and rather more than less. Cortes says, that the city of Tezcuco contained thirty thousand dwellings. But this, Clavigero remarks, should be understood solely of the court; for including the three other cities of Coatlichan, Hvexotla, and Atenco, which as Cortes attests, appeared to form a separate population, it was much larger than Mexico. Torquemada following Sahagun, and the accounts of the Indians, affirms, that these four cities contained one hundred and forty thousand houses. No historian has reported the population of Tlacopan, though all affirm it to have been considerable. Xochimilco, next to the three royal cities, was the largest in the Vale. According to Cortes, Iztlapalapan, had from twelve to fifteen thousand fires; Mixcoac six thousand; Huitzzilopochco from four to five thousand; Acolman and Otompan each four thousand; and Mexicaltzinco three thousand. Chalco, Azcapozalco, Cojoacan, Quauhtitlan, were much larger than the last mentioned cities. All these with many others, were comprehended in the Vale of Mexico alone; and caused no less admiration than fear to the Spaniards, when they first observed them from the top of the mountains of that delightful valley.\*

Cortes thus describes Tlascala, in his letter to Charles V. "It is so large and wonderful, that, although I omit a great deal of what I could say, I believe the little which I do say, will appear incredible; for it is much larger, and more populous than Granada, when it was taken from the Moors; more strong, has as good buildings, and more abundance of every thing." The Anonymous Conqueror observes, "There are great cities, and among others that of Tlascala, which in some respects,

by Clavigero, as above stated. This, at six inhabitants to each dwelling, would give 360,000.

\* Clavigero, Disert. vii.

resembles Granada, and in others Segovia; but it is more populous than either. Tzimpantzinco, a city of that republic, according to the enumeration actually made, by the direction of Cortes, included twenty thousand houses. And by the same authority, Huejotlipan, another town of the same state, had from three to four thousand fires; Cholula twenty thousand, and there were as many in the adjacent villages. Huexotzinco, and Tepejacac, were the rivals of Cholula in greatness.\*

These accounts of the population of Anahuac, are sustained by the immense concourse of people in its markets, the mighty armies which it sent forth, and the great number of baptisms immediately after the conquest, all of which we shall notice in their appropriate places. For two centuries after the conquest, the population continued rapidly to diminish; but in latter years it has increased much, and was estimated in 1803, by M. de Humboldt, at 6.500.000 souls.†

\* Clavigero

† New Spain, book 2. c. 4.

## CHAPTER IV.

- I. *Obscurity of the Ancient History of Anahuac....*
- II. *Annals of the Toltecas....*III. *Great civilization of the Toltecs....*IV. *Destruction of the Toltecan Empire....*V. *Emigration of the Chechemecas from Amequemecan to Anahuac....*VI. *Union of the Chechemecas with the Toltecas....*
- VII. *New Emigrations from the North....*VIII. *Division of the Chechemecas....*IX. *Reign of Xoloth....*X. *His Death and Funeral....*XI. *Accession and Reign of Nopaltzin....*XII. *Tlotzin ascends the Throne....*XIII. *Reign of Quinatzin....*XIV. *Succession of Techotlalla....*XV. *Of other Nations of Anahuac....*XVI. *Olmecas and Xicallancas....*XVII. *Otomies....*XVIII. *Mazahuas....*XIX. *Tarascas....*XX. *Miztecas and Zapotecas....*XXI. *Chiapanese....*XXII. *Cohuixcas, Cuitlatecas, Jopas, Mazatecas, Popolocas, Chinantecas, Totonacas....*XXIII. *Nahuatlacas....*XXIV. *Tlascallans....*XXV. *Of the Aztec Emigration from Aztlan....*XXVI. *Sojourn at the River Gila, and other places....*XXVII. *Separation of the Tribes....*XXVIII. *Progress of the Mexicans....*XXIX. *Arrival in the Vale of Mexico....*XXX. *Their Enslavement....*XXXI. *Successful Engagement with the Xochimilcos....*XXXII. *They celebrate their victory by the first human sacrifice....*XXXIII. *Their Emancipation....*XXXIV. *Foundation of Mexico, second human sacrifice....*XXXV. *Industry of the Mexicans, formation of floating gardens....*XXXVI. *Renewal of their ancient discords, establishment of Tlatelolco....*XXXVII. *Third barbarous sacrifice to Huitzopochtli, and horrible apotheosis of a daughter of the Prince of Colhuacan....*

XXXVIII. *The Mexicans establish a Monarchy, and elect Acamapitzin King....*XXXIX. *The Tlatelolcos also elect a King....*XL. *Exactions of the Tapanecan Monarchs....*XLI. *Summary of the Reign of Acamapitzin, his Death....*XLII. *Huitzilihuitl elected King, intermarries with the Royal House of Azcapozalco....*XLIII. *The Mexicans assist the King of Acolhuacan to suppress a rebellion....*XLIV. *Policy of the King of Acolhuacan....*XLV. *Prosperous condition of the Mexican State....*XLVI. *Jealousy of the Prince of Azcapozalco, its tragical effects....*XLVII. *Death of the first King of Tlatelolco, accession of Tlacatcotl....*XLVIII. *Death of Techotlala, King of Acolhuacan, Rebellion of Tezozomoc....*XLIX. *Demise of Huitzilihuitl, succession of Chimalpopoca.....*L. *Tezozomoc murders his Sovereign, and obtains the crown of Acolhuacan by aid of the Mexicans, who obtain new territories....*LI. *The Mexicans protect the Heir of Acolhuacan....*LII. *Tyrannical Reign of Tezozomoc....*LIII. *His Death....*LIV. *Nezahualcojotl, the Heir of Acolhuacan, attends his Funeral....*LV. *Discord among the Sons of Tezozomoc, Maxtlaton slays his eldest Brother, and seizes the crown....*LVI. *His vengeance against the King of Mexico....*LVII. *Chimalpopoco resolves to become a sacrifice to his Gods....*LVIII. *Is prevented and made captive by Maxtlaton....*LIX. *Maxtlaton invites Nezahualcojotl to Court....*LX. *Death of Chimalpopoco....*LXI. *Maxtlaton seeks to destroy Nezahualcojotl....*LXII. *The latter forms a league with the Mexicans, and makes War upon the Usurper....*LXIII. *Embassy of Montezuma to Nezahualcojotl.....*LXIV. *Terror of the Mexicans at the War with Maxtlaton....*LXV. *Embassy of Montezuma to Maxtlaton....*LXVI.



*Extraordinary contract between the Mexican Plebians and Nobles....LXVII. War with the Tepenecas, and its successful result.*

I. The history of the first peopling of Anahuac, is, like that of other countries, involved in fable. Of the origin of the many tribes, or nations, which inhabited this vast country, we can learn nothing. The annals of the Toltecas, are the most ancient of which we have any knowledge, and they are very imperfect.

II. They relate, however, that having been banished from their own country, *Huehuetapallan*,\* they began their journey in the year 1, *Tecpatl*, corresponding to the 596th of our era.† They proceeded southward under the direction of seven chiefs, sojourning at various places for such periods as suited their convenience or inclination. At the expiration of one hundred and twenty-four years, they permanently established themselves on the banks of a river, where they founded the city of Tollan or Tula, giving it the name of their native country. This, the oldest city of Anahuac, is one of the most celebrated in the history of Mexico, and was the capital of the Toltecan kingdom, and the court of their kings. Their monarchy began in the year 8, *Acatl*, A. D. 667, and lasted three hundred and eighty-four years. This period is divided into cycles of fifty-two years each, and each

\* M. Clavigero, supposes this to have been in the kingdom of *Tollan*, situated north-west of Mexico, from which they derived their name. *Toltecotl*, signifies a native of Tollan. Hist. Mex. book 2.

† The readers will find a notice of the Mexican system of chronology hereafter. We have followed the chronological order of Clavigero. Humboldt says, we know not on what authority, that the Toltecs left their native country in the year 544 of our era, and arrived in Anahuac, in 648, and at Tula, in 670. 2. Humb. Res. 249.



cycle, is supposed to have been ruled by a single prince. Thus 364 years, were occupied by seven monarchs; and Topiltzin, the eighth and last of the line, perished in the twentieth year of his reign, by a pestilence which destroyed his nation.

It would thus appear from their annals, that seven monarchs reigned, each, exactly fifty-two years. But this singularity arose from a provision of their law, by which no king was suffered to reign for a greater or less period. If he completed the cycle upon the throne, he immediately resigned the crown, and another was elected; but if he died before the cycle expired, the nobles assumed the government, which they administered in the name of the deceased, during the remaining years.

III. The Toltecas, were the most celebrated people of Anahuac, for their superior civilization, and skill in the arts; whence in after ages eminent artists were distinguished by this honorable appellation. Their city was well built, and the government ably administered, both in the civil and military departments, but the citizens had more skill in arts than in arms. The nations who have succeeded them, acknowledge themselves indebted to the Toltecas, for the culture of maize, cotton, pepper, and other fruits, and for the art of working metals, and cutting gems. But nothing more adorns their character, than their profound and accurate knowledge of astronomy, which enabled them to construct a calendar, or systematic arrangement of time, which corresponds closely with the true system adopted by the most polished and learned nations of the world, and which was followed by all the civilized inhabitants of Anahuac.

Boturini,\* upon the faith of the ancient histories

\* In a work printed at Madrid, in 1746, under the title of,  
“ Sketch of a general history of New Spain, founded on a great

of the Toltecas, says, that observing in their own country of *Huehuetapallan*, that the solar year exceeded the civil one, by which they reckoned, about six hours, they regulated the latter by interposing the intercallary day once in four years; and that this correction was made more than one hundred years before the christian era. He says further, that in the year 660, under the reign of *Ixtalcuechahuac*, in Tula, a celebrated astronomer, called *Huematzin*, assembled by the king's consent, all the sages of the nation; and with them painted the famous book called *Teoamoxtli*, or divine book, in which were represented by very plain figures, the origin of the Indians, their dispersion after the confusion of tongues at Babel, their journey in Asia, their first settlements upon the continent of America, the founding of the kingdom of Tula, and its progress until that time:—In which, also, were described the heavens, the planets, the constellations, the calendar with its cycles, the mythological transformations, including their moral philosophy, and the mysteries of their deities, concealed by hieroglyphics from common understandings; together with all, that appertained to their religion and manners. He adds, that the eclipse of the sun, which happened at the death of Christ, was marked in their paintings, in the year 7 *Tochtli*, and that some learned Spaniards, well acquainted with the history, and the paintings of the Toltecas, having compared their chronology with ours, found that they reckoned from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ, five thousand, one hundred and ninety-nine years, which is exactly the computation of the Roman calendar.\*

number of figures, symbols, characters, hieroglyphics, hymns, and manuscripts of Indian authors, lately discovered.”

\* M. Clavigero, though apparently indisposed to give entire confidence to the above statement of Boturini, says, “All those

The Toltecas had a distinct tradition of the universal deluge, of the confusion of tongues, and of the dispersion of the people; and they even pretended to name their first ancestors, who then separated from the primitive family. Their religion was idolatrous; and to them is ascribed the invention of the mythology of the Mexicans; but in their worship they are supposed to have abstained from those bloody sacrifices, which afterwards degraded it. The famous idol, representing the god of water, placed on mount *Tlaloc*, is conjectured to have been erected by them; it is certain that they built in honour of their beloved god *Quetzalcoatl*, the highest pyramid of Cholula; and probably, also the famous ones of *Teotihuacan*, in honour of the sun and moon, which still exist, though much disfigured.\*

IV. During the four centuries of their monarchy the Toltecas increased greatly in numbers, and extended themselves in every direction; building many large cities; but the dire calamities which befel them, in the first years of the reign of *Topiltzin*, gave a fatal shock to their prosperity and power. For several years, the heavens denied rain to their fields, and the earth refused the fruits indispensable to their subsistence: The air infested with mortal contagion, daily filled the graves with dead, and the minds of the survivors with consternation. A great part of the nation fell victims to famine

who have studied carefully the history of the nations of *Anahuac*, know very well that those people, were accustomed to mark eclipses, comets, and other phenomena of the heavens in their paintings. Upon reading Boturini, I set about comparing the Toltecan years with ours, and I found the 34th year of Christ or 30th of our era, to be the 7 *Tochtli*: But I did this merely to satisfy my own curiosity, and I do not mean either, to, confirm, or give credit, to the things told us by that author. m

\* Siguenza believes, contrary to all other Mexican historians, that the last were the work of the Olmecks.

and pestilence, among whom was Topiltzin, who died in the twentieth year of his reign; and with him ended the monarchy, about the year 1052, of our era. The wretched remnant of the nation, sought refuge in the neighbouring countries; in Yucatan, Guatemala, the Vale of Mexico, in Cholula, *Tlaximoloyan*, and in other places.

After the destruction of the Toltecas, the land of Anahuac remained a desert, almost depopulated, for the space of a century, until the arrival of the *Chechemecas*.

V. The north of America, like the north of Europe, appears to have been an *officina gentium*, a hive which sent forth swarms periodically, to people the lands of the south. Thus the *Chechemecas* followed the traces of the Toltecas, from their country of *Amaquemecan*, now, altogether unknown, where, according to their accounts, their kings had reigned over the nation for many years. This race was uncivilized but not barbarous. They were still in the hunter state, and lived on game, and the fruits and roots, which the earth spontaneously produced. Their garments consisted solely of skins of their prey; and their arms, of the bow and arrow. Their religion was confined to the worship of the sun, to whom they offered the simplest and purest sacrifice of flowers. Their government however, was more complex and systematic, than usually pertains to so primitive a state of society. They were divided into two classes, noble and plebian; and a king administered the laws, through the instrumentality of the former, whom the people obeyed with submissive reverence. They arrived in Anahuac, about the year of our Lord, one thousand one hundred and seventy.\*

Their emigration from *Amaquemecan*, was con-

\* Humboldt, Res. 2d vol. 251. Clavigero.

ducted by *Xolotl*, a younger son of their former king, who on his father's death, preferred to lead forth a portion of the people, in search of more fruitful lands, than to enjoy a divided power with his elder brother *Achcauhitli*. Their progress brought them in eighteen months, to the ruins of the Toltecan settlements, and thence to *Chempoalla* and *Tepepolco*, forty miles northward from the site of Mexico. But *Xolotl*, having caused the country to be surveyed by his son *Nopaltzin*, who took formal possession, by shooting four arrows, to the four winds, resolved to fix his residence in *Tenayuca*, within six miles of the Mexican lake, and to distribute his people upon the neighbouring lands.

VI. The *Chechemecas*, soon after discovered some families of Toltecas, with whom they formed alliance; *Nopaltzin* marrying *Azcaxochitl*, a virgin descended from *Pochotl*, one of the princes of the royal family of Toltecas. By this fortunate connexion the emigrants acquired the beneficial arts which had blessed their predecessors.

VII. The good fortune of *Xolotl*, most probably became known in his native region, and excited his compatriots to follow his steps. Eight years after he had established himself at *Tenayuca*, he was joined by six chiefs from the country of *Aztlán*, with their respective trains; these are supposed to have been the tribes of *Nahuatlachi*, whose annals are the most important in the history of Mexico, all of whom were kindly received, and had a due portion of land assigned them. In a short time there also arrived three princes of the *Acolhuan* nation, natives of *Teoacoluacan*, a country adjacent to *Amaquemecan*, accompanied by a large concourse of their subjects. This was the most civilized race that had entered Anahuac, since the Toltecas. The princes whose names were *Acolhuatzin*, *Chiconquauhiti*, and *Tzontecomatl*, met with a joyful



welcome; and the two eldest were united in marriage to daughters of Xolotl; whilst the third wedded *Coatetl*, a virgin born in Chalco, of noble parents, and in whom the Toltecan and Chechemecan blood was united. The public rejoicings on this occasion lasted sixty days; and the entertainments consisted of wrestling, and running, and combats with wild beasts, in all which, prince Nopaltzin distinguished himself.

VIII. The introduction of the Acolhuan race, disunited the *Chechemecas*. The gentler portion of the latter, were amalgamated with the former, and the united people assuming the name of its nobler part, was called Acolhua, and their kingdom *Acolhuacan*. Whilst the ruder portion, preferring the chase to the toils of agriculture, and a barbarous independence to the safety of civil polity, withdrew to the mountains, on the north of the Vale of Mexico; where, without chiefs, or laws, or fixed domicils, they employed the day in pursuit of their game, and when fatigued, sunk down to sleep wherever night overtook them. These barbarians, mingled with the Otomies, a tribe attached to a similar life, who occupied a tract of more than three hundred miles in extent; and their descendants, proved troublesome enemies to the Spaniards, for many years after the conquest of Mexico.

IX. Xolotl divided the country into several distinct states, and assigned them to his sons-in-law, and the nobles of each nation. Acolhuatzin received the district of *Azcapozalco*, eighteen miles to the west of Tezcucó; and from him descended the kings, under whose government, the Mexicans continued more than fifty years. On Chiconquauhtli he conferred the state of *Xaltocan*; and on Tzon-tecomatl, that of *Coatlíchan*. The reign of Xolotl was a happy one, and continued for the space of forty years. But it was not wholly without cares.



During the latter part of his life, some insurrections of his people, called forth severities foreign to his character. An incident of this rebellion has been preserved, which is in some measure illustrative of the improvement which society had already attained. The king had about the time of the arrival of the Acolhuan princes, removed his court from Tenayuca to Tezcucó, where he had a palace with spacious gardens, which were cultivated by means of irrigation. In these gardens he was accustomed to take recreation; and frequently to enjoy the repose to which their shades invited. Having a knowledge of this custom, the rebels dammed a small river which crossed the city, and by a ditch, turned its waters suddenly into the gardens, in hopes that the king might perish by the inundation. They flattered themselves, that their design would not be detected, as the disaster might be imputed to an accident, or to ill conducted measures of subjects, who sincerely desired to serve their sovereign, by gratifying a wish he had expressed, that the waters of his garden might be increased. The king, however, had penetrated, but concealed his knowledge of their secret. He retired as usual to his garden, but selected an elevated spot which was entirely safe, for his repose. When he saw the water enter, though the treason was apparent, he continued his dissimulation that he might ridicule his enemies. "I was persuaded," he cried, "that my people loved me; but I now see, that they love me more than I had believed. For I was desirous of increasing the waters of my garden, and behold my subjects have done it without any expense; it is proper therefore to rejoice in my happiness." He, accordingly, ordered a festival in the court; and when it was concluded, departed, full of anguish, and disdain, for *Tenayuca*, resolute to inflict exemplary punishment upon the conspirators;

but a mortal distemper either changed his purpose, or prevented its execution.

X. Upon the death of the king, the nobles from every part of the country assembled, to render to the body, due funeral honours. The corpse was adorned with various small figures of gold and silver, and placed in a chair made of gum copal and other aromatic substances, where it remained for five days. After which it was burned, according to the custom of the Chechemecas, and the ashes gathered in an urn of the hardest stone; which was exposed for forty days in a hall of the royal mansion, where the nobility daily thronged to honour the memory of their sovereign. It was afterwards carried to a cave in the neighbourhood of the city, with loud demonstrations of grief.

XI. The accession of Nopaltzin to the throne was celebrated with acclamations and rejoicings, for another forty days. When the nobles took their leave to return to their respective states, one of them thus addressed the king. "Great king and lord, as your subjects and servants, we go in obedience to your commands, to govern the people, you have committed to our charge, bearing in our hearts the pleasure of having seen you on the throne not less due to your virtue than to your birth. We acknowledge the good fortune unequalled, which we have in serving so illustrious and powerful a lord; and we request you to regard us with the eyes of a real father, and to protect us with your might, that we may rest secure under your shade. You are as well the water which restores, as the fire which destroys, and in your hands hold equally our life, and our death."

Nopaltzin was sixty years old when he ascended the throne, and was surrounded by children and grandchildren. He conferred upon *Tlotzin*, the first born son of his Toltecan queen, the govern-

ment of Tezcucó; and upon his two younger brothers, the states of Zacatlan, and Tenamitic, respectively, in order that they might betimes acquire the difficult art of ruling over men.

Having spent a year at *Tenayuca*, engaged in the affairs of state, which still preserved the disturbed aspect they had at his father's death, the king visited his son at Tezcucó. While there, he with his son and attendants, entered the royal gardens, where overcome by sad recollections, he suddenly burst into tears; and being asked to explain the causes of his grief, he replied; "two causes produce my tears, the one, the memory of my late father, which is revived by the sight of this place, where he used to take recreation; the other, the comparison which I make of those happy days with the present bitter moments. When my father planted these gardens, he had quiet subjects, who served him with sincerity, and received the offices which he conferred upon them with humility, and gratitude; but at present, ambition and discord are every where prevailing. It troubles me to be obliged to use the subjects as enemies, whom I once, in this place, treated as friends. "Do you my son," addressing Tlotzin, "keep constantly in your eyes the image of your grandfather, and strive to imitate the examples of prudence and justice, which he left us."

The members of the royal family seemed to have been not the least turbulent of subjects. Even Acolhuatzin, who was yet alive, coveted the dominions of a neighbouring feudatory, and violently seized them. And *Huetzin*, son of the late prince Tzontecomatl, contended in arms for the hand of *Atotoztli*, a granddaughter of the queen; and having triumphed over, and killed his rival *Jacazozolotl*, he possessed himself of his lordship of *Tepetlaoztoc*.

These petty contests, were succeeded by a war of

more general character, which called the king himself into the field; and though his efforts were attended with various success, he finally accomplished the reduction of the rebels wherever they made head.

XII. Tlotzin, succeeded his father, after a reign of thirty-two years. No event worthy of historical notice, occurred whilst he occupied the throne. But he is represented, as prudent, active, and benevolent; inspiring the evil disposed with dread, and conciliating the affections of the virtuous, who sought out pretences for visiting him, that they might enjoy the charms of his conversation. He enjoyed a peaceful reign of thirty-six years.

XIII. Quinatzin, the son of the preceding monarch, was more warlike, more luxurious, and ostentatious, than either of his predecessors. He fixed his court permanently at Tezcucó, where it remained until the conquest of the Spaniards. In his transition from Tenayuca, he caused himself to be transported in a species of litter, or palanquin, upon the shoulders of four of his principal nobles, whilst four others, bore a parasol, or awning, over his head. Before this time the sovereigns in all their journies, were accustomed to go on foot. But this example of pride and vanity, was immediately followed by all the neighbouring potentates, great and small. His reign, which endured sixty years, was disturbed by many insurrections, caused most probably by his arrogance and exactions; but his martial qualities enabled him to quell all his foes, and to procure for his latter days uninterrupted quiet.

His funeral was conducted with new and extraordinary ceremonies. His body was opened, and embalmed; and afterwards seated upon the throne, clad in royal vestments, and armed with a bow and arrow; before it, was placed an eagle, and behind a

tiger, both carved in wood, emblematical of his courage and power. In this state it was exposed during forty days; and after the usual mourning, was burned, and the ashes, buried in a cave of the mountains, near Tezcuco.

XIV. The sceptre descended to his son *Techotlalla*; but the events of his reign, and those of the following Chechemecan kings, are connected, and will be noticed, with the history of the Mexicans, who had at this period, (the 14th century of the christian era,) founded their famous city. It will suffice at present to observe, that the Chechemecan monarchy, probably began in Anahuac, about the end of the twelfth century, and lasted 330 years, until about 1521, when it ceased with the empire of Mexico. At least eleven legitimate kings, and two usurpers had occupied the throne.

XV. But other nations who were settled in the country of Anahuac, prior to the arrival of the ancestors of the founders of Mexico, ask our attention.

XVI. The *Olmecas* and the *Xicallancas*, whether composing one nation, or distinct tribes strictly united, were so ancient in the country of Anahuac, that they are supposed to have preceded the *Toltecas*.\* Their pictorial writings tell us no more than that they inhabited the country about the great mountain *Matlalcueye*, and that they were driven thence, by the *Teochechemecas*, or *Tlascalans*, to the coast of the gulph of Mexico.

XVII. The *Otomies*, formed one of the most numerous, as well, as the most ancient nations of the

\* They boasted of having vanquished, and destroyed, on their arrival, the giants, or *Quinamctin*; a tradition founded probably on the appearance of the fossil bones of elephants, in the mountains of Anahuac. (*Torg.* tom. 1. p. 37.) Boturini asserts, that the Olmecks, driven out by the Tlascaltecks, peopled the West India islands, and South America. 2 Humboldt's Res. 249.



country; living for ages in barbarism, scattered in the mountain caverns, and depending solely upon the chase for subsistence. They occupied a tract of land, extending more than three hundred miles from the mountains of *Izmiquilpan*, towards the north-west, bounded on the east and west, by nations equally savage. In the fifteenth century, they, for the first time, formed themselves into political society, in dependence upon the crown of Acolhuacan, and settled many places, the most considerable of which, *Xilotepec*, and *Huitzapan*, were near their original habitations. A portion of the nation, was scattered among the Matlatzincas and Tlascalans, and in other provinces, preserving, even down to modern times, their primitive language, though insulated among a foreign people. Still, the larger portion, adhered to their savage habits, hording with the wild Chechemecas, and were not finally subdued by the Spaniards, until the seventeenth century. The Otomies have been always reputed the rudest nation of Anahuac, as well on account of their impracticable language, as their servile life, and in the time of the Mexican kings were treated as slaves. Anciently they were renowned for skill in the chase; but of late years, their principal employment has been a traffic in coarse cloth, for the dress of other Indians.

XVIII. The *Mazahuas*, were once a part of the nation of the Otomies; and the language of each is a different dialect, of the same tongue. But this diversity between nations jealous of preserving their idioms uncorrupted, is a cogent argument of the great antiquity of their separation. Their principal habitations, were on the mountains, west of the Vale of Mexico, and formed the province of Mazahuacan, belonging to the crown of Tacuba.

XIX. The *Tarascas*, occupied the vast, rich, and pleasant country of Michuacan, which they



adorned with many cities and villages. They rivalled the Mexicans in political power, and in the arts. The best mosaic work of feathers, was made in this district, and there only, is this beautiful art still preserved. Like the Mexicans, they were idolatrous, but they did not stain their worship with such excessive cruelties. Their language, is copious, sweet, and sonorous; distinguished by the frequent use of the liquid R; and their syllables, for the most part, consist of a single consonant joined to a single vowel.

XX. The *Mixtecas*, and *Zapotecas*, peopled the vast countries which bear their names, south-east of Tezcucó. They were civilized and industrious, and governed by their own princes and laws, a long time before they were conquered by the Mexicans. They possessed the same arts, the same computation of time, and the same mode of perpetuating their history, as their conquerors. In their paintings, we find a representation of the creation of the world, of a deluge, and of the confusion of tongues. Since the conquest, they have been the most industrious people of America.

XXI. The *Chiapanese* claim to be the original propagators of our species in the new world. Their traditions say, that *Votan*, the grandson of him who built the ark to preserve himself and family from the deluge, and one of the persons engaged in building the great tower which was to reach heaven, went forth by the express command of the Deity, to people that land.—That he, and his companions came from the north, and after their arrival at *Soconusco*, the colony separated; a part, proceeding to Nicaragua, and the others remaining in Chiapan. The power of this state was not, as in the adjacent nations, vested in a king, but in two military chiefs, chosen by the priests. Under which form of government it continued until made

tributary to the Mexican crown. This people also made the same use of painting, and had the same division of time as the Mexicans; but they employed different figures to represent the days, months, and years.

XXII. Of the *Cohuixcas*, the *Cuitlatecas*, the *Jopas*, the *Mazatecas*, the *Popolocas*, the *Chinantecas*, [and the *Totonacas*, we neither know the origin, nor the time when they settled in Anahuac. Their particular customs will be noted whenever they shed light upon the Mexican history.

XXIII. But of all the nations of Anahuac, the most renowned, were those vulgarly called *Nahuatlacas*. This name, the etymology of which we have already explained,\* was given to seven tribes of the same nation, who arrived in that country after the Chechemecas, and established themselves on the shores and islands of the Mexican lakes. These were the *Sochimilcas*, *Chalchese*, *Tapanecas*, *Colhuas*, *Tlahuicas*, *Tlascallans*, and the Mexicans, all of whom, spoke the same language, and derived their origin from the province of Aztlan. Their distinctive names were taken from the places in which they afterwards, respectively, settled. These tribes emigrated from their native country together, but arrived at different periods in Anahuac, in the order we have named. But historians differ as to the time of their emigration.†

The Sochimilcas founded the great city of *Xochimilco*, on the southern shore of the lake Chalco; the Chalchese built the city of *Chalco*, on the eastern shore of the same lake; the Tlahuicas, established themselves in a district, abounding in cinnabar, which in their language was called *Tlahuican*; the Tepanecas are supposed to have

\* See page 1.

† Gama, says, 1064. Clavigero, 1160. Humboldt, 1178.

derived their name from a district in which they dwelt before they founded their famous city of *Azcapozalco*; the Colhuas, whom, some Spanish historians confound with the Acolhuas, erected the small state of *Cohuacan*, which was annexed to Mexico, by the marriage of its heiress with a Mexican prince.

XXIV. The Tlascallans from their importance in American history, merit more particular attention than the preceding tribes. They first settled in a petty district, on the eastern shore of lake Tezcuco, which becoming too straight for their increasing numbers, they endeavoured to enlarge; and by this effort, drew upon themselves the enmity of their neighbours, who entered into a confederacy against them. A battle ensued, ranked among the most bloody and memorable, in Mexican history; in which the Tlascallans proved victorious, and covered the field with the carcasses of their enemies, and tinged the waters of the lake with their blood. Yet, as they could not hope finally to withstand the power of the confederates, they resolved to seek a more extended, and more peaceful habitation. They divided their tribe into two parts; one proceeded towards the south, and the other towards the north. The latter was hospitably received, in the dominions of the Chechemecan king; the former, travelling round the great volcano Popocatepec, through Tetella and Zochimilco, founded the city of *Quauhquechollan*, in the neighbourhood of Atrisco, and further southward *Amaliuhcan*, and other villages. They thus spread themselves as far as *Poyauhtecatl*, or the mountain Orizaba, to which they probably gave that name, in memory of the place they had quitted, in the Vale of Mexico.

The greater and more respectable portion of the tribe, directed their way by Cholula to the bor-

ders of the great mountain *Matlalcueye*, whence they drove the Olmecas and the Xicallancas, after having slain their king *Colopechtli*. But the *Huexozincas*, and other neighbouring tribes attacked them with such impetuosity as to compel them to retreat to the top of that great mountain, and to implore the succour of the Chechemecan king. By aid of this monarch, they were enabled to assume their former position, and to lay the foundation of the famous city and republic of Tlascalla.

Originally, the whole state was governed by a single chief. But as it became populous, it was parted into four divisions, each of which had its separate sovereign. A federal senate composed of these four lords and their principal nobles, determined upon peace and war, prescribed the number of troops to be raised, and the officers to command them, and regulated all matters connected with the general welfare. Although the boundaries of the state were circumscribed, it contained many cities and large villages, in which, in 1520, there were more than one hundred and fifty thousand houses, and more than five hundred thousand inhabitants. The republic was fortified on the western quarter by intrenchments, [on the east, by a wall six miles in length, on the south, by the mountain Matlalcueye, and by other mountains on the north.

The Tlascallans, were warlike, brave, and jealous of their honour, and their liberty. They long sustained the splendour and independence of their republic; but their alliance with the Spaniards proved as fatal to them, as the hostility of the invaders did to the Mexican empire; both nations were involved in a common ruin. They were idolators, as superstitious and cruel in their worship, as the Mexicans. Their favourite deity was *Camaxtli*, worshipped by the latter, under the name of *Huitzilopochtli*. Their arts were the same

as those of the neighbouring nations. Their chief articles of commerce, were maize and cochineal. The abundance of the former, gave the name *Tlascallan* to their capital, which signifies the place of bread. Their cochineal was esteemed above all other, and after the conquest, brought yearly to the capital, a revenue of two hundred thousand crowns.

XXV. We are now to treat of that portion of the Aztec race, which entered last into the country of Anahuac, and which forms the chief subject of our history. They departed from their primitive seats in Aztlan, situated on the north of the gulph of California, in the year 1160 of the christian era. The cause and course of their emigration, are distinctly narrated in their native chronicles, and whatever credit these may be entitled to, we cannot, with propriety, withhold them from the reader.

A distinguished, and influential chief, called *Huitziton*, having from some unknown cause resolved to quit his native country, applied himself to the superstition of his countrymen, to induce them to adopt a like resolution. Selecting a coadjutor much revered by the people, he conducted him to a tree haunted by a small bird, whose notes imitated the Mexican word *tihui*, which means, *let us go*; and thus addressed him. "Attend my friend *Tecpaltzin*, to the cry of this little bird. Do you not hear him constantly repeat *tihui, tihui*? What can this mean? Is it not the voice of some divinity, who thus communicates to us his will, that we should abandon this country in search of a better; and shall we not obey his command, and thereby, avoid his just anger, which our refusal must inevitably draw down upon our heads?" *Tecpaltzin* concurred in this wise interpretation of the oracular song; and their representa-



tions, disposed the body of the nation to follow the counsel of Huitziton.

The term of their emigration was long, and their course devious and uncertain. Having passed the Colorado or red river, which discharges itself into the gulph of California. from beyond the latitude of  $35^{\circ}$  they proceeded towards the south-east as far as the river *Gila*, where they sojourned a considerable time, as is inferred from the ruins of some great edifices built by them upon the borders of that river.

The country, on the river *Gila*, was visited in 1773, by Fathers Garces and Font. On a vast and beautiful plain, one league distant from the southern bank of the river, they discovered the ruins of an ancient Aztec city, in the midst of which is an edifice, called *La Casa Grande*. These ruins occupy a space of more than a square league. The great building faced the four cardinal points, having in length from north to south 445 feet, and in breadth from east to west, 276 feet, and was constructed of clay. The walls were 3 feet 11 inches thick. It consisted of three stories and a terrace; the stairs were on the outside, and probably of wood. At the time of this visit there remained five apartments, each, 27.18 feet long, 10.82 feet wide, and 11.48 feet high. A wall supported by large towers, surrounded the principal edifice; and vestiges of an artificial canal, which conducted the waters of the *Rio Gila* to the town, were discovered. The surrounding plain was covered with broken earthen pitchers, and pots prettily painted, in white, red, and blue, among which, were pieces of obsidian.

The last substance found here is deemed by the learned, as a very curious circumstance, proving that the Aztecs passed through some unknown northern country containing this volcanic substance; and that it was not the abundance of obsi-



dian in Mexico, which suggested the use of razors and arms of *Itzli*.\*

From the Rio Gila, the Mexicans advanced S. E. to about the  $29^{\circ}$  of N. latitude, more than two hundred and fifty miles distant from the city of *Chihuahua*, to a place also known as the *Casa Grande*, on account of another immense building, still existing, which, by the universal tradition of these people, was erected by them in their peregrination. This edifice is constructed on the plan of those of New Mexico, and consists also of three stories, with a terrace above them. The door is on the second floor, so that a scaling ladder is necessary to enter it. It has every mark of a fortress; was defended upon one side by a lofty hill, and upon the other sides, by a wall seven feet thick, whose foundations still remain. In this vast fabric are stones, as large as mill stones; the beams of the roof are of pine, and artfully wrought. In the centre is a mound obviously designed as a watch tower. In the ditches of the place, several culinary utensils have been found, such as earthen pots, dishes, and jars; and also mirrors of *Itzli*.†

From *Casa Grande*, still pursuing a southern direction, and traversing the steep mountains of *Tarahumara*, they reached *Huiccolhuacan*, the present Culiacan, on the gulph of California, in  $24^{\circ} 30'$  N. latitude, where they rested three years. Here they formed of wood, a statue of their tutelary deity *Huitzilopochtli*, and placed it upon a throne of reeds and rushes, which they called *Teoicpalli*, or chair of god, that it might accompany them throughout their travels. Priests were also chosen, whose duty it was, four at a time, to bear the statue upon their shoulders. They received the title of

\* 2 Humboldt's N. Spain, 205.

† Clavigero, book 2.

*Teotlamacazque*, or servants of god, and the act of transportation was termed *Teomama*.

XXVII. The next station of the Aztecs, was *Chicomoztoc*. Hitherto the seven tribes had travelled together; but they now separated, from some unknown cause of disagreement. The Mexicans alone continued to abide here, for the space of nine years. The situation of *Chicomoztoc*, is not accurately known, but is supposed to be twenty miles distant from the city of *Zatecas*, towards the south, where there are also remains of large edifices. From the country of *Zacatecas*, they journeyed southward, through *Amica*, *Cocula*, and *Zayula*, into the maritime province of *Colima*; and thence to *Zacatula*; where turning to the east, they ascended to *Malinalco*, in the mountains which surround the valley of *Toluca*; and afterwards changing their course to the north, they arrived in the year 1196, at the celebrated city of *Tula*.

XXVIII. In their journey from *Chicomoztoc* to *Tula*, they sojourned at *Coatlicomac*, where the tribe was divided into two factions, which became perpetual rivals, and alternately persecuted each other. This discord was occasioned, as, they say, by two bundles, which miraculously appeared in the midst of their camp; the one containing a precious stone, and the other two pieces of wood. All admired the first, and a great contest arose for its possession. The second were generally contemned, until the wise *Huitziton* explained their use in the production of fire. They who appropriated to themselves the gem, were those, who after the foundation of Mexico, called themselves *Tlatozolcas*, from the place which they settled, near that city; they, who took the wood, subsequently bore the name of Mexicans, or *Tenochas*. This account must be considered a moral fable merely, teaching, that in all things, the useful is to be pre-

ferred to the agreeable. Notwithstanding this dissent, both parties travelled together, on account of their imaginary interest in the protection of their god.

The erratic course of the Aztecs, which caused them to journey upwards of a thousand miles more than was necessary to reach Anahuac, is to be ascribed to the search for a country suitable in all respects to their wishes. It is probable, that every place at which they made a temporary settlement, they considered as the term of their peregrination. Wherever they stopped, they raised an altar to their god; and at their departure, left all their sick behind, with proper persons to take care of them, and such others, as wearied by their long pilgrimages, were unwilling to encounter fresh fatigues.

XXIX. They remained twenty years in Tula, and its vicinity; and in 1216, arrived at *Zumpanco*, a considerable city of the Vale of Mexico, whose lord *Tochpanecatl*, received them with great humanity, and formed an alliance with them, marrying his son *Ilhuicatl*, to an illustrious maiden, of their race, called *Tlacapantzin*, who became the progenitors of the Mexican kings. In the interval between 1216 and 1245, the tribe occupied several positions on the borders of the lake Tezcucuo; and in the latter year, sought refuge, from the oppression of a neighbouring potentate, in *Acocolco*, a district composed of a number of small islands at the southern extremity of the lake. There, for the space of fifty-two years, they led a miserable life, dwelling in huts of reeds, clothing themselves with the leaves of the *amoxtli*, and subsisting on fish, insects, and the roots of the marshes.\*

\* M. de Humboldt, sought in vain for this position, the Indians of Mexico were unable to designate it. 2 N.S. lib.3.c.8.

XXX. Wretched as this condition certainly was, there was yet a lower depth of misery. The tribe amid all their privations, had still the solace of freedom. But of this, they were soon after deprived, by the petty prince of Colhuacan; who seducing them from their islands, under pretence of bestowing upon them a more desirable habitation, overwhelmed them by superior force in their march, and carried them as slaves to the district of Tizapan. A few years after this event, the Colhuacans being sorely pressed in a contest with the Xochimilcas, enrolled the Mexicans among their forces, who arming themselves, with staves hardened in the fire, with knives of itzli, and shields of woven reeds, fought with such courage and skill that they turned the fate of the war; and drove the enemy from their city into the mountains.

XXXI. Among all these nations, the bravery of a warrior was not estimated so much by the number of foes that he slew in battle, as by the number of captives he made. When the engagement was over, the Colhuas presented themselves before their general with their prisoners, and called upon the Mexicans to exhibit similar proofs of their courage; but the latter having taken four prisoners only, whom they did not produce, they were reproached with cowardice. Whereupon they brought forth many baskets, filled with the ears of the enemy, and said, "judge from these witnesses, how many captives we might have made, had we been so inclined. But we chose rather to employ our time in the destruction of the enemy, than to waste it in binding them." This reply, abashed the masters, and excited apprehensions of danger, from the prudence and courage of their slaves.

XXXII. Upon their return to their dwellings the Mexicans prepared to celebrate their victory, by a sacrifice to their tutelary god, and asked of the

Colhuas a suitable offering for the altar. These sent them a dead bird, covered with ordure, and wrapt in a coarse and filthy cloth. Too feeble to punish this indignity, the Mexicans smothered their resentment, and placed on the altar a knife of itzli, and an odoriferous herb. The petty king of Colhua, with his nobles, failed not to present themselves at the festival, to mock their slaves. The rites were commenced with a solemn dance, in which the latter appeared in their best garments; and whilst the spectators were wrapt in attention, they brought out the four Xochimilcan prisoners, and having made them join in the dance for a short time, sacrificed them on a stone, opening their breasts with the knife of itzli, and tearing out their hearts, which, whilst yet warm and beating, they offered to their god.

XXXIII. This horrible sacrifice, the first of the kind which occurs in Mexican history, was most probably, the result of those dark, and ferocious propensities, which a state of desperation is apt to create; and perhaps, was also designed to terrify the oppressors, by a display of the reckless disposition of the oppressed. If such were the object, it produced the desired effect. The Colhuas, struck with dismay at the deed, instantly liberated slaves so cruel, who might in future, become destructive to the state.

The Mexicans having left Colhuacan, wandered for several years, through the adjacent countries. During this short peregrination, they celebrated the recovery of their freedom, by making a small mountain\* of paper, intended to represent Colhuacan; around which they spent a whole night in dancing, singing their victory over the Xochimilcas,

\* The Mexicans represented Colhuacan in their pictures, by the figure of a hunchbacked mountain, and the name has exactly that signification.



and returning thanks to their god, for their liberation. This celebration, was most probably on the anniversary of their bloody sacrifice. And as they ascribed the favourable interposition of their deity, to this inhuman offering, they inferred that such oblations were most acceptable to him; and hence, a barbarity accidentally committed, grew into a common and cherished rite of religion.

XXXIV. They established themselves for a short time at Acatzitzintlan, which they called Mexicaltzingo, from *Mexitli*, a name of their god of war, and afterwards, at *Iztalco*. But an oracular tradition had declared, that, the tribe should assume that spot, as the site of their city, and permanent habitation, in which they should discover an opal, or opuntia plant growing from a stone, and surmounted by the foot of an eagle. This long-sought sign, they at length discovered on the small island of Tenochtitlan, in the lake Tezcuco, in the year 2 Calli of their calendar, and the 1325th of the christian era. They commenced the foundation of their city, by the erection of a temple of wood, to their god Huitzilopochtli, which they consecrated by the sacrifice of another human victim. One of the tribe having gone out in quest of an animal for the offering, encountered a Colhuan, named *Xomimiltl*, whom he overcame, bound, and brought to his countrymen; who fired at once by revenge and superstition, instantly immolated him on the altar. Around the sanctuary, they now built their wretched hovels, of reeds and rushes, being destitute of every other material. Thus was commenced the city of *Tenochtitlan*, which in after times became the metropolis of a great empire, and the largest and most beautiful of the new world. Its name of Mexico, which afterwards prevailed, was derived from that of its tutelary god, *Mexitli*; and it also bore his other title, *Huitzilopochtli*.



XXXV. By this change of situation, the Mexicans did not immediately better their condition. Insulated by the lake, without lands to cultivate, or garments to cover them, and distrusted by their neighbours, they sustained themselves with great difficulty. But necessity, the fruitful parent of enjoyment, indicated many expedients. They procured additional soil, by banking out the water from the borders of their principal island, and by connecting it with several smaller adjacent islets. And applying themselves industriously to catch fish and water-fowl, with which the lake abounded; they bartered these with their neighbours for wood, stone, food, and other necessities. They also fell upon a mode of increasing their territory, that was highly ingenious, and which had long before been adopted in China, under similar impulses. They constructed rafts of the branches of trees, and of canes and rushes, upon which they laid the mud taken from the bottom of the lake, several inches thick, which were thus converted into rich floating gardens, perpetually watered, and moveable at the will of the proprietor; upon these they raised, many esculent vegetables, fruit-trees, and flowers.\*

XXXVI. Amid these successful exertions of industry, the harmony of this incipient nation was disturbed by the renewal of the discord which originated during its migration; and which resulted in the secession of one of the factions to the adjacent island of Tlatelolco; (in 1338,) many years afterwards incorporated with the extended city. The members of these subdivisions were distinguished as *Tlatelolcos* and *Tetonochas*; but we shall continue to speak of them under the

\* These plats were commonly of a quadrangular form, about eight perches long and three wide; and elevated one foot above the surface of the water.

general name of Mexicans. About the period of this event, the miserable city was divided into four quarters, each of which was placed under the protection of a god, subordinate to their great deity. This division still subsists under the names of St. Paul, St. Sebastian, St. John, and St. Mary.

XXXVII. In honour of this Moloch, they also about this time† made an extraordinary and abominable sacrifice, which is justly considered another offering to their vengeance and superstition. They dispatched an embassy to the prince of Colhuacan, requesting one of his daughters, to be consecrated mother of their supreme god; declaring that they had his express command to exalt her to this high dignity. The prince, moved by vanity and religious fear, instantly granted their demand; and the Mexicans conducted the damsel in triumph to their city, where she had scarcely arrived, when their implacable god, by the mouths of his priests, commanded, that she should be slain and flayed; and that one of the bravest youths of the nation should be endued with her skin. With a horrible refinement of cruelty, they invited the father to be present at the apotheosis of his daughter, and to become one of her worshippers. He was led into the sanctuary, where the youth stood by the side of the idol, clad in the gory skin of the victim, and partially concealed by the obscurity of the place. But when, by the light emitted from the censer which he bore, he became conscious of the nature of the spectacle, the deluded parent, shrieking with anguish, rushed from the temple, and called upon his people to avenge the execrable deed. But this they dared not attempt, being intimidated by the greater force of the Mexicans, and the superstitious fear of the vengeance of their terrible god; upon which,

† A. D. 1338.

the disconsolate father retired to his principality to weep over his easy credulity. But, his enemies preserved their faith, by the deification of his daughter under the name of *Teteoinan*, or the “*mother of gods*,” by which she was ever afterwards known and worshipped.

XXXVIII. Previous to the year 1352, the Mexican government was aristocratical, and administered by twenty chiefs, the most respectable of the tribe by their birth and wisdom. At this period, in imitation of the surrounding nations, they resolved to elect a king, and the choice fell upon *Acamapitzin*, the son of *Opochtli*, a descendant of the beneficent lord of Zumpanco, and of *Atozoztli*, a daughter of the royal house of Colhuacan. The nation demanded a wife for the new king from the ruling princes of Tacuba and Tepaneca; but their request being disdainfully rejected, they applied more successfully to the lord of Coatlichan, from whom they obtained his daughter Ilancuetl.

XXXIX. The Tlatelolcos, also, created a king; but they preferred a foreigner to one of their own nation, and procured the son of Azcapozalco, the Tepanecan monarch, who was paramount lord of all the Mexican isles. He was crowned first king of Tlatelolco, in the year 1353.

XL. The dependence of the Mexicans upon the Tepanecans, was acknowledged by an annual tribute of fish and water-fowl. But *Azcapozalco*, offended at their choice of a king without his sanction, resolved to increase his exactions, in hopes that by these means, he might drive from his neighbourhood a people, whose increasing power he began to dread. He doubled the former contribution, and required in addition, many thousand willow and fir plants, and a floating garden stocked with all the kinds of vegetables known in Anahuac; and in the two succeeding years, he demanded for the first, a

like garden, containing a swan and duck in the act of incubation, and for the second, a garden bearing a living stag. To obtain the last, the Mexicans were compelled to course the mountains and forests possessed by their enemies. These requisitions were fulfilled, and for fifty years the Mexicans continued to submit to like impositions.

XLI. Acamapitzin reigned thirty-seven years. Under his government, the nation increased rapidly in population, buildings of stone were erected, and those canals, so useful and ornamental to the city, were commenced. From pictures in Mendoza's collection, it appears, that he took part in several military enterprizes of the neighbouring chiefs; but it is uncertain whether he made any acquisitions for his own state, which comprised only, the city of Mexico. His first wife proving barren, he took others to his bed; and by the daughter of the lord of Tetepanci he had several children, among whom were *Huitzilihuitl* and *Chimalpopoca*, who succeeded him; he had also, by a favourite slave, *Itz-coatl*, one of the best and most renowned of the kings of Anahuac. A short time before his death, Acamapitzin convened his chief subjects, and, having recommended to them the care of his wife and children, resigned the crown; charging them to bestow it upon him whom they should deem most competent to promote the public weal.

XLII. An interregnum of four months ensued upon the demise of Acamapitzin, during which, the people were engaged in settling the order of the election, and the ceremonial of the coronation of their future monarchs. *Huitzilihuitl* was chosen to succeed his father; and immediately after the election was declared, the people conducted him, in procession, to the throne, anointed him with oil, placed upon his head the *Copilli* or crown, and tendered to him their respectful homage. The

chief priest and principal nobles, then addressed him in formal speeches, in which they congratulated him upon his succession, and endeavoured to impress upon his mind a full sense of the duties of his station. The Mexicans, it would seem, were particularly desirous to connect their Royal family with that of Azcapozalco. They now very humbly sued, again, for a princess of that house to be their queen, and were highly gratified by the success of their application; which was without doubt, produced by the consideration that their increasing power had procured for them. *Huitzilihuitl*, afterwards married *Miahuaxochitl*, a daughter of the prince of *Quauhnahuac*, by whom he had *Motezuma Ilhuicamina*, the most celebrated of the Mexican kings.

XLIII. About this period *Tzompan*, prince of Xaltocan, revolted against his feudal lord *Techotlala*, king of Acolhuacan, and seduced many of his fellow feudatories into rebellion. The king, from regard to the birth of the principal rebel, who was the last descendant of *Chiconquauhtl*, one of the primitive Acolhuacan princes, having offered in vain, to pardon his offence on condition that he would lay down his arms, ordered out his forces; which were joined by the Mexicans and Tepenecas, whose services he had demanded. Victory declared for the monarch, and all the rebel chiefs were put to death. This war is painted in the third picture of Mendoza's collection.

XLIV. The order which *Techotlala* introduced into his kingdom and household, after the suppression of the rebellion gives us no mean opinion of his power, his policy, and his wealth. He divided the state into seventy-five districts; in each of which he placed a subordinate chief, and a band of strange, and probably, mercenary troops, who, though oppressive to the subjects, made the regal



authority respected. He collected around his person his chief nobility, and like the kings of Europe, conferred upon them domestic offices, which were deemed highly honourable. Thus, beside a general of his army, he had an entertainer, and introducer of ambassadors, a species of grand marshal of the palace; a major domo; an overseer of the cleaning of the royal houses, and a superintendant of the artificers in gold, or lord treasurer. By these means, he increased the splendour of his court, and strengthened the throne; amusing restless and aspiring spirits, which might otherwise have sought occupation and distinction, in projects prejudicial to his power.

XLV. By the new alliance of the king of Mexico, and the glory acquired in the late war, the state became stronger, and more respectable in the eyes of its neighbours. Its trade was extended, and its prosperity was apparent, in the improved habiliments, and general condition of the citizens. Cloths of finely woven cotton were substituted for the coarse stuffs manufactured from the fibres of the wild palm, hitherto, universally worn: And the tribute to the king of Azcapozalco, was no longer demanded, his daughter, the queen of Mexico, having obtained its release, upon the birth of her son *Acolnahuacatl*, within the first year of her marriage. The feudal dependency however, was still acknowledged.

XLVI. This prosperous condition was viewed with great jealousy by *Maxtlaton*, son of the king of Azcapozalco, and half brother to the queen of Mexico; inasmuch, as the crown of the Tepanecas, might one day fall to her son. Maxtlaton sought occasion for quarrel with Huitzilihuitl; and ten years after his marriage, accused the Mexican of having deprived him of his wife; his sister, as he alleged, having been his affianced bride. He



summoned him to appear before the council of Azcapozalco, to answer to this ridiculous charge. The defence of Huitzilihuitl, was no doubt, as satisfactory, as it was ready, and removed all pretext for violence. Yet Maxtlaton angrily replied, "I might now, without hearing more, put you to instant death, and so punish your boldness and avenge my own honour. But I will not have it said, that a Tepanecan prince killed his enemy in a treacherous manner. Depart in peace, time will give me an opportunity of taking a more honourable revenge." The threat and the forbearance, were no doubt right royal. Nor was the threatened vengeance, in atrocity, any way inferior to the rank of the perpetrator. *Acolnahuacatl*, the nephew, whose accession to the Tepanecan throne was dreaded, was cruelly murdered in the heart of his native city, by the command of his uncle, and with the connivance of his grandfather. And yet, notwithstanding this stroke of policy, this *coup d'etat*, which is scarce surpassed by any of the admirable feats of the 15th century, not even by those of Louis XI. of France, nor by the well instructed princes of Italy, the European historians most preposterously deny to the nations of Anahuac the rank of a civilized people.

XLVII. In the same year with this tragical event, (1399,) died Quaquaupitzhuac, the first king of Tlatelolco, leaving his city much greater, and his subjects more civilized, than at the commencement of his reign. He was succeeded by Tlacatcotl, with regard to whose origin, historians are not agreed. The rivalry between the Mexicans and Tlatelolcos contributed greatly to the aggrandizement of their respective cities. And their secular year 1 Tochtli, which answers to the year 1402 of our era, was celebrated, by both, with more magnifi-

cence, than any of the four which had elapsed since their first leaving the country of Aztlan.

XLVIII. At this time, Techotlala far advanced in years, still reigned in Acolhuacan; but perceiving his end approaching, he instructed his son and successor *Ixtlilxochitl*, carefully to conciliate the minds of his great feudatories, lest they should be corrupted and seduced by the ambitious and crafty Tezozomoc. Nor was this warning dictated by a groundless fear. Scarce was the venerable king inhumed,\* than Tezozomoc, besides his own vassals the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco, united in an insurrectionary league many of the great tributaries of Alhuacan, who for the space of three years, disturbed the peace of the whole country, and threatened the subversion of that empire. The length of the war exhausted the strength of both parties, and the crafty rebel, with a view to recruit his means, proposed a peace, which *Ixtlilxochitl* gladly embraced, without indemnity for the past, or security for the future.

XLIX. At the conclusion of the war,† Huitzilihuitl died, after a reign of twenty years, and his brother Chimalpopoca was elected to the throne. Upon this occasion, was established the singular custom of the Mexicans, of choosing their monarch from the brothers, or in their default, from the grandsons of the preceding king.

L. The treacherous Tezozomoc made such industrious use of the time he had obtained, that within a year he was in condition to resume hostilities; and he finally succeeded, after perfidiously murdering his sovereign, in gaining possession of his kingdom, expelling therefrom the true heir *Nezahualcojotl*, the grandson of Acamapitzin, the first king of Mexico, who, though endowed with

\* 1406.

† 1409.

great genius and magnanimity, was compelled during many years, to wander in obscurity, in momentary dread of death from the tyrant. In the division of the spoil, the city of Tezcuco was given in fief to Chimalpopoca, and that of Huexotla, to Tlacatcotl. Tezozomoc, fixed his own residence in Azcapozalco, which he proclaimed the capital of his dominions.\*

LI. Upon the solemnization of this event, many of the enemies of the usurper attended in disguise, and amongst them, the exiled prince; who filled with grief and rage, proposed, rashly, to assail the conqueror even amid his troops, but he was restrained by the prudence of his friends, who urged him to await a more favourable moment for the recovery of his crown; representing that the tyrant was already worn by age, and that his death could not be far distant, when the people would gladly submit themselves to their lawful sovereign. The disguise of the prince, however, was detected; but he was preserved from violence and captivity by the secret favour of the multitude, and open protection of the Mexicans. One of the chief officers of the latter, ascended the temple which the Toltecas had at the court, and proclaimed aloud, "Hear, Chechemecas, hear Acolhuas, and all ye who are present; let no one dare to offer any injury to our son Nezahuacojotl, nor suffer others to hurt him, if he would not subject himself to severe chastisement." This threat so boldly made, in the presence of the tyrant, shows the confidence which the Mexicans now had in their own power, and the respect paid them by the confederates.

LII. The use which the usurper made of his power, was such as might be expected from the manner in which it was obtained. His avarice

equalled his ambition. Not content with the tribute of provision and garments, which his subjects had been accustomed to pay to their king, he exacted by proclamation, large contributions of gold and precious stones, which proved grievously burdensome to his people. The Toltecan and Chechemecan nobles answered the proclamation by requesting to be heard in person before the king in remonstrance against the impost. On this occasion, his arrogance appeared to them unbounded, and contrasted strongly with the moderation of the ancient princes from whom he was descended. They subsequently sent him two deputies, one from each nation, and the most learned of their order, with instructions to protest energetically against this procedure.

The Toltecan orator, taking precedence by reason of the antiquity of his nation, represented to the tyrant the humble origin of the Toltecas, the miseries they endured before the dawn of that splendour which distinguished them, the misfortunes which had subsequently overwhelmed them, and the difficulties with which they had struggled since the arrival of Xolotl in Anahuac; all which should move a generous prince to compassion, and induce him to exempt them from new grievances. The Chechemecan took a more lofty tone. "I, my lord," said he, "may speak with greater confidence and freedom. I am a Chechemecan, and address myself to a prince of my own nation, a descendant of the great kings Xolotl, Nopaltzin, and Tlotzin. These divine men set no value on gold or precious stones. They wore no other crown than a garland of herbs and flowers, and adorned themselves with no other bracelets than the stiff leather, against which, beat the strings of their bows. Their primitive food was raw flesh, and undressed herbs, and their robes, the skins of the wild beasts which

they ran down in the chase. When they were taught agriculture by the Toltecas, their kings themselves cultivated the soil, that by their example their people might be encouraged to labour. Nor did the wealth and glory to which they afterwards attained, render them luxurious and arrogant. As kings, 'tis true they required the services of their subjects, but loving them as their children, they were content to be requited for their care by the simple fruits of the earth. I remind you of these illustrious examples of your ancestors, solely, that I may entreat you not to demand more from us, than they did from our forefathers." The tyrant listened composedly to these harangues, and though irritated by the comparison between himself and his ancestors, he was contented to command the orators to repeat to their constituents, his orders for the payment of the new tax.

LIII. Notwithstanding these demonstrations of discontent, Tezozomoc maintained himself in peace, for twelve years, until his death, upon the throne. But his quiet was disturbed by the terrors of a guilty conscience, and superstitious fears. In his visions, he beheld Nezahualcojotl, transformed into an eagle, open his breast and devour his heart; or changed into a lion, rend his body and drink his blood. Yet such was the energy of his spirit, that though age had so enfeebled his frame, that he could no longer sit upright, and so diminished the vital heat, that he was obliged to be wholly covered up with cotton, in a great basket, he, from this sepulchre, issued the necessary orders for the government of his kingdom, and presided in the councils of justice. He charged his sons *Tajatzin*, *Teuctzintli* and *Maxtlaton*, to slay Nezahualcojotl, as speedily as possible, yet so secretly, that the author of his death might not be suspected; and, having declared Tajatzin his successor, he died in



1422, cursed by his people as a monster of ambition, treachery, and injustice.

LIV. At his funeral, according to custom, the principal feudatories were invited, and the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco attended. Even Nezahualcojotl ventured from his retreat, and accompanied by a confidential friend, visited the court, that he might observe the disposition of the people. He entered the hall of the royal palace, where the corpse lay exposed, with the sons of Tezozomoc, the king of Mexico, and many other lords, seated in order around it, all of whom he saluted, after the manner of the country; presenting to each a small bunch of flowers; after which he seated himself among the mourners, by the side of Chimalpopoca, his brother-in-law. Teuctzintli, proposed to his brothers, to avail themselves of this opportunity to execute the charge of their father; but, Maxtlaton more prudent, replied, "Banish from your mind such a thought. What would men say of us, should they behold us plotting against the life of another, when we ought to be mourning our father? Would they not say, that the grief is not deep which yields to ambition and revenge? Time will present us an occasion more favourable for the accomplishment of our father's purpose, without incurring the odium of his subjects. Nezahualcojotl is not invisible. Unless he hide himself in fire, in water, or in the bowels of the earth, he will inevitably fall into our hands."

LV. Scarce was the funeral pile consumed, before discord arose among the sons of Tezozomoc. Tajatzin, the legitimate heir, possessed a feeble understanding and a sluggish temperament. Whilst Maxtlaton had the ambition, art, courage, and cruelty, which distinguished his father. Instead of leaving to his brother, as was his duty, the obsequies of the deceased monarch, he assumed their



direction to himself; and upon all other occasions, demonstrated a design to possess himself of the chief authority; and in a short time, the reigning king, became a mere shadow in his court. When the sceptre had thus departed from him he sought to recover it by consulting with the king of Mexico, to whom he had been recommended by his father. Chimalpopoco, who, the short duration of his dynasty, considered, had acquired a large share of royal qualities, instantly proposed assassination as the most speedy and certain cure for his grievances. "I will point out to you," said he, "a method to get rid of your brother, and to retrieve without danger your sinking power. Abstain from inhabiting the palace of your deceased father, under pretence, that, your residence there, perpetually revives your grief for his loss. Build yourself another, and when it is finished, invite your brother to an entertainment; and there in the midst of the wassail, it will be easy to free yourself of a rival so dangerous and unjust, and your kingdom of a tyrant; and that you may the more certainly succeed, I will aid you in person, with all the forces of my nation." This counsel was received by Tajatzin in moody silence, and therefore his resolution in relation to it is uncertain.

But to this discourse, a servant of Tajatzin was a secret auditor. He instantly departed to communicate it to Maxtlaton in hopes of a large reward. That politic prince dissembled his anger and apprehension, and reprimanding the reporter, for his audacity in calumniating his most respectable and attached friends, dismissed him as a drunkard, and commanded him to digest his wine at home. But he passed the remainder of the night, in determining on the means of anticipating his brother; and at length resolved to catch him in his own snare. On the following morning he assembled the people

of Azcapozalco, and told them, that having no right to remain longer in his father's palace, but having occasion for a house at court, when business required him to come thither, from his state of Cojohuacan, he desired they would show their love to him by the speedy construction of a dwelling. Such was the diligence and number of the workmen employed, that the simple Tajatzin who had spent but three days in Mexico, was not more surprised at the advanced state of the building than pleased with the cause assigned for its erection, and congratulated himself, on the altered disposition of his brother. As soon as the new palace was finished Maxtlaton invited his brothers, the kings of Mexico and Tlatelolco, and other lords to an entertainment. Chimalpopoca saw in this invitation the reflection of his own plan, and warily abstained from the feast. But, Tajatzin hastened to it, with joy and confidence, and in the midst of his conviviality, and probably when oppressed with wine, he sunk to eternal sleep, beneath the knives of his brother's satellites. The company were shocked at this sudden tragedy, but when its proximate cause was explained, they applauded its justice, and joined in elevating the perpetrator to the throne.

LVI. Maxtlaton procrastinated, but did not forego his vengeance against the king of Mexico. When the annual tributary present of the latter was made, consisting of baskets of white fish, craw fish, frogs, and pulse, accompanied by the most polite congratulations, and most solemn protestations of submission and affection, it was received with open demonstration of satisfaction; but the return gift, which was made according to custom by the suzerain, marked more emphatically than words, his hatred and contempt. It consisted of a woman's gown and shift; intimating, that he es-

teemed the Mexican an effeminate coward. An insult, which Chimalpopoco could neither forgive, nor avenge; yet it was followed by one of greater aggravation. He had a wife singularly lovely, whose beauty had inflamed Maxtlaton, and the latter had brooded over a dire revenge. He found too, among the ladies of his court, willing instruments of his passions, who, invited the Mexican queen to spend some days in pleasure with them; such visits being frequent among persons of the first rank, of the different nations; and unmoved by tears and prayers, another Tarquin violated another Lucretia. Here we have as irregular heavings of ambition, as ever rose in a petty state of christendom, or even in Osmanlie; deep intrigues, involving the lives of princes and the fate of states; violent and irresistible love most classically gratified, and above all, because more civilized than all, a most courtly dissimulation;—And yet, the learned Europeans have denied to the Mexicans an equality of civilization.

LVII. But the outraged wife did not seek to cover her shame in the grave. That fate was deemed in Mexico, more appropriate for the injured husband. And Chimalpopoca, resolved like many other heroes of his nation, to offer himself a sacrifice to his god; that he might thereby cancel his dishonour, and avoid an ignominious death which he dreaded from his enemy. A resolution so highly approved by his courtiers, that some of them were emulous to partake of its glory.

LVIII. On the day set apart for this tragic scene, the king appeared dressed in the vestments of the god Huitzilopochtli, whilst his companions of the religious sacrifice, were clothed in their best garments. But, this honourable death was denied him by his relentless foe. For, before his turn came for immolation, and when there remained but two

of the voluntary victims to precede him, a band of Tepenecas rushed into the temple, and bore him captive to Azcapozalco, where he was confined in a strong wooden cage, the ordinary prison of these nations.

LIX. Maxtlaton having thus obtained possession of one of his chief enemies, sought to get Nezahualcojotl also into his power; and to this end invited him to court, under pretence of adjusting his claims on the crown of Acolhuacan. The prince was not a moment deceived by this wile, yet moved by the rash courage of youth, and the confidence of a magnanimous soul, he did not shrink from the sternest dangers. Accompanied by Chachaton, a favourite of the usurper, but who was also friendly to himself, he appeared at the palace, and addressing Maxtlaton, said; "I know my lord that you have imprisoned the king of Mexico, and that you purpose also to take my life. Behold me before you. Kill me with your own hands, and thus gratify your hatred against a prince not less innocent than unfortunate." Moved by his intrepidity, the tyrant, who was not wholly without generosity, was turned from his purpose for the time, and assured him that he had no design upon his life, nor upon that of the king of Mexico, and he even granted him permission to visit the imprisoned monarch.

LX. A short conference with Chimalpopoca, satisfied the adventurous prince of the folly of his temerity; and after receiving from the prisoner, his nose and ear jewels, as a mortuary gift, he hastened to seek covert against the enmity of Maxtlaton. Chimalpopoca, believing that he was destined to perish under the cruelty of his foe; and having no hope of rendering further service to his nation, disdained to hold his life by so odious a tenure as the will of his oppressor, and hanged himself from a bar of his

prison. The spirit of Cato was not prouder, nor more nobly displayed. His reign of thirteen years was concluded in 1423, during which, he had considerably advanced the reputation, and increased the territories of his city. Her religion also was indebted to him, for the establishment of two altars, formed each of an immense stone; one designed for the ordinary, and the other for the gladiatorial sacrifices. In the Mexican pictorial annals, there is represented a naval combat on the lake, which occurred during his reign.

LXI. The escape of the two princes from his vengeance, for the self-inflicted death of the one, was deemed an escape, roused into greater activity the malignant passions of Maxtlaton. He dispatched four of his bravest officers in pursuit of Nezahualcojotl, with orders to put him to death without remission wherever they should find him. They set out for Tezcuco, where, the prince at their entrance, was engaged in a game of ball. It being his practice wherever he sojourned, to mingle in the sports of the people, as well to conciliate their affections, as by a light carriage to conceal his intrigues from the agents of the usurper. When apprized of the arrival of the four armed Tepanecans, he retired to his innermost apartment involved in an intricate labyrinth, from which he made his escape, to *Coatitlan*, a small settlement of weavers; where, he was so popular, that several preferred to suffer death, rather than betray his asylum. Among these noble victims, *Tochmantzin*, the superintendent of the looms of Coatitlan, and Matlalintzin a woman of rank, are mentioned.

LXII. This open attack on his life, induced the prince to bring the insurrection which he had been long fomenting, to a head. With the encouragement of the Mexicans, who had chosen Itzcoatl, brother of Chimalpopoco, their king, and of the



versatile Chalchese, he united the Cholulans, the Huexotzincos, and the Tlascallans, before Tezcucó, with the determination of commencing the war, by taking that city by assault, and punishing its inhabitants for their infidelity to him in adversity. But his anger being appeased by the submission of the citizens, who sent their aged, and their sick, their pregnant women and helpless infants to invoke his mercy, he contented himself with dispatching one division of his army, to put the governor and his officers, who had been established by the tyrant, to death; whilst another division made a furious and successful attack on the city of Acolman, where the brother of Maxtlaton fell in the general slaughter. On the same day, the Chalchese attacked the city of Coatlichan, took it without opposition, and slew the governor at the foot of the altar, in the great temple. Thus, in a single day, the capital, and two other considerable cities of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, were reduced to the obedience of their legitimate prince.

LXIII. Upon this success, the king of Mexico, who had not openly joined in the war, sent an ambassador to congratulate the victor. His representative on this occasion, was *Monteuczoma*, or *Montezuma*, his nephew, and son of Huitzilihuitl, whose actions obtained for him the cognomen of *Tlacaele*, or "*Great Heart*," and *Ilhuicamina*, the "archer of heaven;" whence he was distinguished in the Mexican paintings, by the representation of the heavens over his head, pierced with an arrow. The mission was attended with great danger, as Maxtlaton had possessed himself of the roads. He succeeded however, in delivering his message, but fell into an ambush on his return, set for him by the Chalchese; who, though present auxiliaries to *Nezahualcojotl*, were inveterate enemies of the Mexicans. *Totcotzin*, lord of Chalco, with



a view of ingratiating himself with the Huexotzincas, sent his prisoners to them, proposing that they should be sacrificed to the gods in their city, with the assistance of the Chalchese, or in Chalco, with the aid of the Huexotzincas. The latter, however, refusing to receive the prisoners, or to participate in the detestable offering, the captors determined to make their peace with Maxtlaton, and to atone for their treachery against the Tepanecas, by offering the captives to that monarch. But, before the tyrant's answer was received, Quateotzin, the officer charged with the prisoners, commiserating the fate of a youth so distinguished and brave, as Montezuma, set them at liberty, and indicated the means of their safe return to Mexico. This act of extraordinary beneficence cost him his life. Toteotzin ordered him to be instantly executed, and his body to be quartered. Nor did he spare his wife and children. One son, and one daughter, however escaped to Mexico, where they were held in high honour, on account of the generous devotion of their father. Maxtlaton spurning the double treachery of the Chalchese, commanded Toteotzin instantly to liberate the Mexicans; reproaching him at the same time for his perfidy. Yet his anger towards the Mexicans was in nowise appeased, but burned with inextinguishable fierceness, and he prepared to pour upon them the full tide of his indignation.

LXIV. The rumour of the approaching war, spread consternation and dismay, among the Mexican populace. They believed themselves altogether unable, even aided by Nezahualcojotl, to contend with the Tepanecas, whom they had hitherto acknowledged as their superiors, and they crowded around their king, imploring him to avert the impending calamity. "Demand peace;" they cried, "and make offers of service to the king of Azcapo-

zalco; and to move him to clemency, let our god be borne on the shoulders of the priests into his presence." So great was their clamour, accompanied by threats, that the king fearing a sedition, was disposed to yield to their request. But Montezuma, indignant at the proposal, reproached both people and king, so bitterly for their pusillanimity, that he induced them to abstain from this degrading humility, and simply to propose to Maxtlaton, the preservation of peace upon honourable terms; and as none other would risk his life in the embassy, he offered himself, for the mission; observing, that "as death must one day be inevitable, no better opportunity could present itself of dying, than in the service of his country."

LXV. The distance between the cities of Mexico and *Azcapozalco*, was but four miles, and Montezuma, hastening to the tyrant, demanded peace upon equal terms. The latter proposed to refer the demand to his counsellors, and promised a definite answer on the following day; the ambassador unwilling to trust himself, even when clothed with a sacred character, in the power of Maxtlaton, engaged to return to receive it. Having heard from the king, his unalterable resolution for war, he instantly defied him, and tendered him the gage for battle after the manner of the Mexicans; presenting him with defensive arms, anointing his head, and fixing upon it some feathers, such as were used for adorning dead bodies, preparatory to interment; and in the name of his sovereign, devoting the Tepanecan nation, to utter ruin. These ceremonies and threats were endured by Maxtlaton with great patience, being doubtless appropriate to the occasion; and in return, he presented Montezuma with arms for his master, and with a magnanimity, which is certainly greatly at variance, with the character ascribed to

him by the Mexican historians, he dismissed the ambassador by a private outlet from his palace, that he might not sustain any injury from his temerity. This courtesy was ungratefully returned by Montezuma, who, when he had passed the guards in safety, reproached them for their negligence, and threatened them with speedy destruction. Upon this insult, they instantly attacked him; but he defended himself bravely, and having slain one or more of them, made his escape to Mexico.

LXVI. The city was thrown into new consternation, by the declaration of war, and the people in deep despondence proposed to abandon it. The king and nobles strove to encourage them with hopes of victory. "But if we are conquered," said they, "what shall be our fate?" "If that happen," answered the king, "we are bound to deliver ourselves into your hands for sacrifice, at pleasure." "So be it," replied the people, "if we are conquered; but, if we attain the victory, we, and our descendants, shall be tributary to you, and be obliged to cultivate your lands, and those of the nobles, to build your houses, and to carry for you, when you go to war, your arms and your baggage." This contract, which made slavery the reward of victory, does not seem the greatest excitement to battle. But, it was probably understood by the parties, that these services were but fair returns for protection.

LXVII. The city of Mexico from its insulated position, was easy of defence. It could be approached only in boats, or by the causeways which connected it with the continent, and of the number of these extraordinary works, for which the city was afterwards admired, two at least, were made at this period. To defend these dykes, was the principal duty of the Mexican army, which was composed of the Mexican forces proper, and the

Tezcucans under Nezahualcojotl. The Tepanecan army appeared in the field in great strength on the following day, under a distinguished commander, called *Mazatl*; Maxtlaton holding his enemy in too much contempt, to honour him by personally engaging in the war. Yet his army made a brilliant show; the soldiers being adorned with plates of gold, and having beautiful plumes of feathers on their heads, to add to the appearance of their stature. The Mexicans, however, do not appear to have trusted to their position, for they met the foe on the main land. *Itzcoatl*, gave the signal of battle by striking upon a small drum, which he carried upon his shoulder. The day was fought with doubtful success. At one period, the Mexicans were so discouraged, that they shamelessly proposed to sue for quarter, and to offer up their king and the general Montezuma, as a propitiation to Maxtlaton. A desperate sally of the king and nobles, saved them from this ignominy; and the death of the Tepanecan commander, by the hand of Montezuma, gave new hopes and vigour to their troops. The fall of night prevented them from making the most of this circumstance, and both parties retired to prepare for a fiercer combat on the ensuing day. Maxtlaton passed the night in exhorting his captains, representing to them on the one hand, the glory of triumph, and on the other, the misery of defeat. Victory would preserve the Mexicans, in dependence, but defeat would render themselves slaves. But, he failed to offer them the benefit of example, and actuated by pride, prudence, or cowardice, shut himself up in his palace, whilst his troops fought nobly in the field.

The battle renewed at sunrise was sustained till noon, when the Tepanecas were routed and pursued to their city; whence they were driven to the mountains, whilst the king sought to hide himself in a

secret recess, where he was soon discovered by the conquerors; who, notwithstanding his prayers and entreaties, beat him to death with sticks and stones, and threw his body into the fields to feed the ravenous birds. The city was delivered up to be plundered; and its buildings and temples were nearly razed to the ground. And soon after, by the assistance of the Tlascalans and Huexotzincas, the greater portion of the Tepanacan nation was reduced under the sway of Nezahualcojotl, their legitimate sovereign. But the city and state of Azcapozalco, fell in the division of the spoil, to the kings of Mexico, from whose dominion it was never afterwards separated. These events, which had great effect on the internal, as on the external polity of the Mexicans, occurred in the year A. D. 1425, precisely one century after the foundation of the capital. Itzcoatl availed himself of his success, to fix upon his subjects the services which they had proposed. He assigned to Montezuma, and other nobles, and plebians, who had distinguished themselves in the war, a portion of the conquered lands; but he banished forever, all those, who had proved cowardly in battle, and had shamefully craved the mercy of the foe. Towards his friend and ally, he acquitted himself with tolerable good faith; for, though he retained Azcopozalco, and several other important places, by the right of conquest, and might, by the same right, have preferred more extensive claims on the kingdom of Acolhuacan, he suffered Tezcucoc, which had been given him by Tezozomoc, but most probably had been resumed by his successor, to remain in the possession of Nezahualcojotl, its hereditary lord.



## CHAPTER V.

- I. *Division of the conquered Territories of the Tepanecas. League between the Kings of Mexico, Tlacopan and Acolhuacan....*II. *Prudence and capacity of Nezahualcojotl....*III. *New acquisitions by the Mexicans....*IV. *Death of Itzcoatl....*V. *Election of Montezuma, institution of the sacrifice of prisoners of war at the coronation, subjugation of the Chalchese....*VI. *Marriage of Nezahualcojotl, instance of his love of poetry, and of his poetical talents....*VII. *War with Tlatelolco, death of its King....*VIII. *Additional conquests by Montezuma....*IX. *Inundation of Mexico, dyke of Montezuma....*X. *Famine in Mexico....*XI. *War with Coaixtlahuacan, new acquisition of Mexico....*XII. *Confederacy against Montezuma, spirited conduct of Moquihuix, King of Tlatelolco, annexation of the province of Cotasta, to the empire of Mexico....*XIII. *Extraordinary patriotism of Ehecatepec, brother of Montezuma, revolt of the Chalchese....*XIV. *Further conquests of Montezuma....*XV. *Civil labours of this Prince, his Death....*XVI. *Election of Axayacatl....*XVII. *His conquests....*XVIII. *Death of the first King of Tacuba....*XIX. *Death of Nezahualcojotl, his character and policy....*XX. *Is succeeded by Nezahualpilli....*XXI. *Subjection of Tlatelolco, to the Mexican dominion....*XXII. *Additions to the empire by Axayacatl, his Death....*XXIII. *Succession of Tizoc, his short and obscure reign....*XXIV. *Rebellion of the brothers of Nezahualpilli....*XXV. *Double nuptials of Nezahualpilli, his issue....*XXVI. *Elevation of Ahuitzotl, to the throne of Mexico, his extensive conquests,*



*completes the erection of a Temple, monstrous sacrifice of human victims, his fatal project for replenishing the lake, his death....XXVII. Montezuma, Xocojotzin or the second, ascends the throne, his pride and ostentation.....XXVIII. His unsuccessful war with Tlascala....XXIX. Extraordinary magnanimity of a Tlascallan chief....XXX. Continued wars of Montezuma ....XXXI. His superstition, presages of the overthrow of the empire....XXXII. Impatience of the subjugated nations under the Mexican yoke....XXXIII. Death of Nezahualpilli, his character....XXXIV. Cacamatzin elected King of Tezcucó, revolt of his youngest brother Ixtlilxochitl.*

From the time of the subjugation of the Teapanecan tribes, A. D. 1425, precisely one century after the formation of the city of Mexico, we may date the great advance of the Mexican power.

I. The conquered lands were divided in three portions. One was retained by Itzcoatl, another was assigned to the Alcolhuacan prince, and a third to *Totoquihuatzin*, a Tepenacan, a grandson of Tezozomoc; on the supposition that his nation would live more contentedly under the Mexican power, when administered by one of their native chiefs. This prince had taken no part in the late war, either because of a secret predilection for the Mexicans, or aversion to his uncle Maxtlaton. He was created king of Tlacopan. or rather of Tacuba, and of the country to the westward, including Mazahuacan, upon condition of serving the king of Mexico with all his troops whenever required, receiving a fifth part of the spoils, which might be taken from the enemy. The king of Acolhuacan entered into a like covenant, receiving a third of the remainder of the plunder; the balance was re-

served for the kings of Mexico. Besides, both these kings were created honorary electors of the Mexican monarchy, with the restricted right, however, of ratifying the choice of the four Mexican nobles, who were the real electors. In a word, they became vassals of the Mexican empire, whom that power by covenant, was bound to protect. And this confederacy, which was based upon a plan for the conquest of the surrounding nations, remained firm and inviolate for more than a century, and was the principal means of the subsequent acquisitions of the Mexican crown.

II. Nezahualcojotl was a prince of extraordinary merit. He applied himself with equal prudence and energy to reduce the disorders which twenty years of misrule, under the usurpers, had introduced; and his kingdom became in a short time more flourishing than it had ever been under his predecessors. He restored and new modelled the councils which had been established by his grandfather, and conferred offices, only on those properly qualified to fill them. One court entertained causes purely civil, another judged criminal cases only. The council of war consisted of the most distinguished military characters, over whom, Icotihua-can, son-in-law of the king, and one of the thirteen chief nobles of the kingdom presided. The treasury board comprized the royal *major domos* and the first merchants of the realm. Among these officers there were three who were especially charged with the collection of the tributes, and other branches of the royal revenue. Academical associations for the encouragement of poetry, astronomy, music, painting, history, and the art of divination, were instituted; at whose sittings the most celebrated professors of the kingdom assisted, communicating their discoveries and inventions. And these arts and sciences, although little advanced,

were taught in schools appropriated to them respectively. For the accommodation of the mechanic branches, the city of Tezcuco was divided into more than thirty districts, each appropriated to its proper trade; the goldsmiths, the sculptors, the weavers, &c., inhabiting their peculiar divisions. To cherish religion, he raised new temples, created ministers for the worship of the gods, gave them houses, and appointed them revenues for their support, and the expenses of the festivals and sacrifices. To augment the splendour of the court, he constructed noble edifices, both within and without the city, and planted new gardens and forests, which were in preservation many years after the conquest; some vestiges whereof, may probably yet be traced.

III. The excited ambition of the Mexicans, soon led them into new wars. The Xochimilcas were found guilty of preparing to circumscribe the Mexican power, whilst it was possible to limit its dominion. The confederate army under the command of Montezuma, in a few days, captured their city of Xochomilco, and subjugated their state. The Cuitlahuachese, inhabiting a city on a small island in the lake of Chalco, soon after shared the same fate. In this excursion Montezuma, dispensing with the confederate forces, selected some companies of young men, chiefly from the Mexican seminaries, and having properly disciplined them, conveyed them in suitable vessels to Cuitlahuac, and in seven days reduced the city. He returned loaded with spoil, and furnished with numerous captives for sacrifice to the god of war. The chief of Xiuhtepec, a city of the Tlahuicas, more than thirty miles southward of Mexico, had obtained from the prince of Quauhnahuac the promise of one of his daughters to wife; but, before the consummation of the marriage her father gave

her to the prince of *Tlaltexcal*. The rejected suitor, unable from his inferiority of force, to avenge the insult, implored the assistance of the king of Mexico, proffering in return, to become his friend and ally, and to serve him whenever required with his person and his people. Itzcoatl esteeming this a just and fitting occasion for extending his dominions, armed his subjects, and called upon those of Acolhuacan and Tacuba. The aid of his allies was necessary, in as much, as the natural position of Quauhnhuac was very strong, as the Spaniards afterwards experienced when they besieged it. The joint army attacked the city in three quarters at once; the Mexicans by Ocuilla, on the west, the Tepanecas by Tlatzacapulco on the north, and the Tezcucans and Xiuhtepechese by Tlalquitenanco on the east. The Quauhnhuachese trusting to the strength of their town, sustained the assault, and bravely repulsed the Tepanecas who commenced it; but the other divisions advancing, they were compelled to submit themselves to the king of Mexico, to whom they afterwards paid an annual tribute in cotton, pepper, and other commodities. By this conquest, the empire was considerably extended on the south; and soon afterwards on the north, also, by the acquisition of the cities of *Quantititlan* and *Toltitlan*.

IV. In the year A. D. 1436, Itzcoatl died at an advanced age, after a reign, full of glory, justly celebrated in the Mexican annals for his singular endowments, and extraordinary services. He reigned thirteen years, and before his elevation to the throne, had been in command of the Mexican armies for thirty years. Besides rescuing the nation from subjection, extending its dominions, emblazoning its glory by restoring the royal family of the Chechemecas, to the throne of Acolhuacan, enriching his court, by the plunder of conquered

nations, and laying the foundation of its future power, by the triple alliance which he formed, he had increased its splendour and greatness by the erection of many new edifices, among which, was a temple to the goddess *Cihuacoatl*, and another to *Huitzilopochtli*.

V. The late king having no surviving brother, the election, by custom, was confined to one of the grandsons of his father. The merit of Montezuma, far out-shining that of all competitors, he was elected to the vacant throne with universal applause, and extraordinary rejoicings. On this occasion we have the first distinct notice, perhaps the introduction, of the barbarous custom of sacrificing a large number of victims, upon the coronation of the king, and of making war for the express purpose of obtaining them. Having erected a temple immediately after his election, by the aid of his allies, in that part of the city called *Huitznahuac*, he chose to direct his arms against the Chalchese, that he might obtain from them the necessary offerings. He was induced to this choice, as well by the injuries he had himself sustained from these people, as by some fresh enormities practised by them, against subjects of the Mexican and Acolhuacan states. The campaign was obstinately contested, but the allies were finally successful, and Chalco became a dependency of the Mexican crown.

VI. The fierce wars and cruel customs we have described, depict the nations of Anahuac as barbarians, notwithstanding the relief which their devotedness to agriculture and the other arts of peace, gives to the darker shades of the painting; and we have pleasure in recording a trait more congenial with that civilization, which Clavigero, the prince of their historians, has claimed for them.

Although *Nezahualcojotl* had in early life several wives, and many children, yet since the death



of the princess of Mexico, which occurred before he regained his throne, he had not allied himself with any royal family, and had consequently no consort, who held the rank of queen. He now married a daughter of the king of Tacuba, a beautiful, and modest virgin, who was conducted to Tezcuco by her father and the king of Mexico. At the festival given on this occasion, at which the allied kings and the nobles of the three courts were present, the Acolhuacan prince caused his musicians, to sing to the accompaniment of their instruments an ode, which he had himself composed, beginning thus, "*Xochitl mamani in ahuehuetitlan*," in which the shortness of life and its pleasures are compared to the fleeting bloom of a flower. The audience was deeply affected by the pathos of this song, and eyes, that a few hours before, perhaps, had gazed unmoistened upon the butchery of a hecatomb of victims, sacrificed to the terrific Mars, wept over a description of life, fading like the the evanescent tints of the rose. We recognize in this scene, a similarity to the sentimental supper of the Roman nobles, after their return from an exhibition of gladiators.

VII. The Tlatelolcos, the near neighbours, and almost domestic inmates of the Mexicans, had observed their extraordinary progress, to power with jealousy and envy. Quauhtlatoa, even conspired with some neighbouring lords, against the life of Itzcoatl, but his designs had been timely detected, and defeated. From that period, such distrust and enmity sprung up between the sister cities, that scarce any intercourse was preserved between them. But under the reign of Montezuma, Quauhtlatoa, having resumed his hostile purposes, his city was assaulted, and the envious king put to death.

VIII. Montezuma, also, upon some favourable pretence, carried his arms still further to the south



and annexed to his empire, the states of *Huaxtepec*, *Jauhitepec*, *Tepoztlan*, *Jacapichtla*, *Totolapan*, *Tlalcozauhltan*, *Chilapan*, which were more than a hundred and fifty miles distant from the court; *Coixco*, *Oztomantla*, *Tlachmallac*, *Cohuixcas*, *Tzompahuacan*, and many others. These conquests were made during the nine first years of his reign.

IX. Amid these military labours, Montezuma found leisure to complete a great civil work, of much utility to his city, although not productive of all the beneficial results which he anticipated. In the tenth year of his reign, (A. D. 1446,) a great inundation of the lake, occasioned by heavy rains, overflowed the city of Mexico, destroying many houses, and rendering the streets impassable, except by boats. By the advice of the king of Tezcuco, and the labour of an immense number of workmen, from all the neighbouring districts, he constructed a dyke across the lake, for the protection of the city, nine miles in length, and twenty feet in width, composed of two parallel palisades, with the interval filled with stone and sand. A people capable of conceiving and executing such a work must have attained a high degree of civilization, and have possessed great forecast, enterprise, and industry. And it is no light evidence of their genius, that the Spaniards have not succeeded in applying a much more perfect remedy for the evil which recurs at this day.

X. The inundation was shortly followed by a famine, which greatly retarded the advance of Mexico. In 1448, and 1449, the maize crop was destroyed by a premature frost, and in the year 1450 the harvest was totally lost for want of rain. In the year 1451, the season was also untoward, and the scarcity of seed was such, that an adequate quantity could not be planted. Hence in the year 1452, the necessities of the people became so great,

that, though the public granaries were opened for their relief, many were obliged to purchase the means of sustaining life, by the sacrifice of their freedom. Montezuma, unable to provide for their wants, suffered his subjects to seek subsistence in other countries; vainly endeavouring to serve them by commanding, that no woman should sell herself for less than four, nor a man for less than five hundred ears of corn. Many who sought relief abroad, perished on their way, others who sold themselves for food, never returned. The greater part of the populace supported themselves, like their ancestors, upon the herbs, the fowl, the fish, and the insects of the lake. The following year was more favourable, and in 1454, which was a secular year, there was an abundant harvest of maize, pulse, and fruit.

XI. The waxing power of the Mexicans, excited perpetual fears among the surrounding nations, which still maintained their independence. And they from time to time awakened hostilities, by the abuse of Mexican merchants, or the capture of some distinguished chief. Atonaltzin, prince of Coaixtlahuacan, in the country of the Mixtecas, having resolved to measure his strength with Montezuma, forbade the entrance of any Mexican into his dominions. To the demand of Montezuma, by his ambassadors, for a satisfactory explanation of his conduct, the Mixtecan prince, replied by an exhibition of his wealth, and by rich presents, made in scorn, accompanied with this defiance, "Bear this present to your king, that from it, he may learn how much my subjects give me, and how great is their love; and that I willingly accept the proffered war, that it may be determined whether they shall pay tribute to the king of Mexico, or the Mexicans to me." In the first campaign of the war, which immediately followed, the hitherto invincible Mon-

tezuma, was driven back, though sustained by his allies. But in the succeeding one he was more successful, defeating not only the Mixtecas, but also the armies of the Huexotzincas and Tlascalans, who had united to resist him. This victory procured for Mexico, dominion over Coaixtlahuacan, Tchtepec, Tzapotlan, Tototlan and Chinantla; and in the two following years, she extended her sceptre over *Cozamaloapan* and *Quauhtochto*\*

XII. In the succeeding year, a war induced by like causes as the preceding, broke out with *Cuetlachtlan* or Cotasta, a populous province on the gulph of Mexico, formerly inhabited by the Tlascalans. The Cotastese invoked the aid of the Huexotzincas and Tlascalans, who, burning with shame for their late defeat, and thirsting for vengeance, readily acceded to their request, and seduced the Choluans into the confederacy. The army of Montezuma was officered by the flower of the nobility of Mexico, and her dependant states, among whom *Axajacatl* the general in chief, *Tizoc*, and *Ahuitzotl*, brothers of the royal family of Mexico, who successively filled the throne, after Montezuma, were distinguished; but the hero of this war was Moquihuix, the king of Tlatelolco. The Mexican army had commenced its march before Montezuma was apprized of the combination of the hostile states. The king, informed of this unexpected coalition, instantly issued orders for a retreat, which were disobeyed at the instance of Moquihuix, who declared his determination to proceed with his own subjects only, rather than turn his back upon the enemy. The engagement which followed, was one of the most important recorded in the Mexican annals, as well on account of the number of forces employed, as the loss of lives in

\* A. D. 1454.—1456.

battle. The Cotastese and their allies were defeated with dreadful slaughter; and six thousand two hundred captives sacrificed to the insatiable god *Huitzilopochtli*, formed an appropriate honour to the consecration of the *Quaxicalco*, or religious edifice, destined for the preservation of the skulls of his victims. The whole province of Cotasta was annexed to the Mexican empire, and the praises of Moquihuix were chaunted in an ode, which Boturini had preserved among other manuscripts and paintings in his very valuable museum. Montezuma more pleased at the happy result of the war, than offended by the disobedience of his orders, rewarded the audacious prince with the hand of his cousin, the sister of the above named Mexican chiefs.

XIII. The oft offending Chalehese, at this time drew upon themselves the severest chastisement. Among their many plans of shaking the Mexican power, was that of raising a Mexican prince to the throne, whose influence might divide and distract his native city, and they selected for the purpose, the lord of Ehecatepec, the brother of Montezuma, himself. That prince having repeatedly rejected their proposals, they at length possessed themselves of his person by violence, and proclaimed his coronation. Under these circumstances, he feigned to accept the crown, and on pretence that his exaltation might be the more solemn, he desired them to erect in the market place, one of the highest trees, and place a scaffold upon it, from which he might be viewed by the whole people. Having assembled his attendant Mexicans around him, he ascended the scaffold, with a bunch of flowers in his hand, and thus addressed them. "Ye know well, my brave Mexicans, that the Chalchese wish to make me their king, but it would be impiety to our god, thus to betray our country. I choose rather by my

example to teach you to prefer fidelity to it, rather than life itself." And instantly casting himself headlong to the ground, he was dashed to pieces. An act of patriotic devotion, certainly unsurpassed in Roman story. The Chalchese exasperated by the deed, fell instantly upon the other Mexicans, and slew them with their darts. On the next evening, hearing the melancholy hooting of an owl, their superstitious fears interpreted it, as an omen of impending ruin. Nor were their divinings falsified. Montezuma caused fires to be kindled on the neighbouring mountains as signals of his revenge, and pouring upon their country like an overwhelming torrent, he swept before him almost every trace of population. Those who escaped his arms, fled to the mountain caves for refuge, or passed over to the territories of Heuxotzinco and Atlixco. The city of Chalco was sacked and plundered, and a large portion of its lands distributed among the officers of the devastating army. But when the indignation of the king had been thus appeased, the spirit of mercy or of policy, resumed its place in his bosom. He recalled the scattered fugitives, some of whom he re-established in their country, whilst he settled others in districts of *Amaquemacan* and *Tlalmanalco*.

XIV. After this expedition, he conquered Tamazollan, Piaztlan, and Xilotepec, Acatlan, and other places. By these rapid conquests, he extended his dominions eastward, to the gulph of Mexico; on the south-east, to the centre of the Mixtecan country; on the south, beyond Chilapan; on the west, to the valley of Toluca; on the north west, far into the wilds of the Otomies; and on the north, to the termination of the vale of Mexico.

XV. Nor was Montezuma less distinguished for his civil policy than his military successes. He published new laws, increased the splendour of his



court, and introduced many ceremonials unknown to his predecessors. He erected a large temple to the god of war, ordained many new religious rites, and increased the number of the priests. The interpreter of Mendoza's collection of paintings, adds, that he was sober and temperate, and remarkably rigorous in punishing drunkenness; and that by his justice, prudence, and general propriety of deportment, he made his subjects fear and love him. After a fortunate reign of twenty-eight years and some months, he died, A. D. 1464, universally regretted.

XVI. His grandfather Acamapitzin, previously to his death, surrendered the crown, that the people might elect the most suitable successor; without any intimation of preference on his part, as to the choice. But Montezuma, earnestly recommended to the electors, that they should select Axayacatl, as the most worthy to succeed him. And he was accordingly chosen to the exclusion of his elder brother. This prince was the son of Tezozomoc, brother of the three kings who preceded Montezuma, and a grandson of Acamapitzin.

XVII. To obtain victims for the sacrifice at his coronation, the new monarch carried his arms against the province of Tecuantepec, situated on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, four hundred miles south-east of Mexico. The country was bravely defended, but, the greater experience and discipline of the Mexican troops prevailed; and their conquest was extended over Tecuantepec to Coatlulco, a port much frequented by the Spaniards, in the succeeding century. The first years of the reign of Axayacatl, were employed in extending and consolidating the acquisitions of his predecessors. In 1468, he obtained a complete victory over the Huexotzincas, and Atlixcas. On his return from this war, he undertook the building of a



temple, which he called *Coatlan*. The Tlatelolcos erected another in rivalry, which occasioned the renewal of the discords, that had been happily appeased.

XVIII. In 1469, died Totoquihuatzin, the first king of Tacuba, who, during forty years that he ruled that small kingdom, was faithful to his alliance with the Mexican states. He was succeeded by his son Chimalpopoca, who emulated his courage and fidelity.

XIX. But in the following year, the allied nations mourned a greater loss, in the death of Nezahualcojotl. This prince is justly celebrated, for possessing the most gifted, the most cultivated mind, in ancient Mexico. He displayed equal capacity, as a general, a politician, a poet, a law giver, and philosopher. Schooled in adversity, by the misfortunes of his early life, he bore his tribulations during thirteen years, with fortitude and constancy. His attachment to the laws was inviolable; of which in his youth, he gave a stern and indiscreet example. Even whilst striving to arouse his nation against the usurper Maxtlaton, he punished, by instant death, a woman whom he discovered selling wine, contrary to legal prohibition. His integrity in the administration of justice was inflexible, and he caused four of his own sons to be executed, for committing incest with their mother-in-law. And that judges might not be tempted to swerve from their duty, he provided amply for their subsistence out of the royal treasury.

But his clemency to the unfortunate was also remarkable. The laws imposed the pain of death for taking anything from another's field, and even the theft of seven ears of maize incurred the penalty. To remove all pretence for these petty crimes, he commanded that the sides of the principal highways, should be annually sown with maize, and

other seeds, the fruits of which, were free to every passenger. He spent a large portion of his revenue in relief of the poor, especially of those who were aged, sick, or in widowhood. His expenditures in these objects, and for the support of his ministers and magistrates, would be incredible, were they not certified by original paintings,\* and confirmed by the testimonies of his descendant in the third degree, Don Antonio Pimentel. The annual amount of this charge upon the revenue, reduced to Spanish measure, counting one hundred and thirty pounds to the fanega, was of maize, six hundred and thirty-seven million, thirty-nine thousand pounds; of cocoa, three hundred and fifty-six millions, seven hundred and twenty thousand pounds; of *chili*, or common pepper and tomatl, forty-one million, six hundred thousand pounds; of *chiltecpin* or small pepper, thirty-one thousand, two hundred pounds; of salt, one thousand three hundred large baskets; and of turkeys, eight thousand. Beside which, the quantity of chia, beans, and other leguminous plants; of deer, and fowl, was enormous. How great must have been the population, to pay in tribute this amazing mass of provisions; and how extensive must have been the commerce, by which the cocoa alone was obtained! The latter could be procured in barter only, and was the product of the warm countries; there being no soil in all Acolhuacan adapted to the culture of this plant. During one half of the year, or nine Mexican months, fourteen cities furnished such provisions, and fifteen other cities supplied them, during the other half year.†

\* These paintings were in the possession of the first religious missionaries, and Torquemada, the historian, had them in his hands.

† The above account, is a heavy draft upon the credulity of the reader; but it is sustained by fair historical testimony, and

The progress of this king, in the arts and sciences, is still more extraordinary. By the force of his own genius, he became a poet, a naturalist, and astronomer; and soaring beyond the superstitions of his nation and his age, he attained to the high truths of pure and natural theology. His sixty hymns composed in honour of the Creator of heaven, were celebrated even among the Spaniards. Two of his odes or songs, translated into Spanish verse, by his descendant, Don Ferdinand d'Alba Ixlixochitl, were preserved by Boturini. One of these, written on the destruction of Azcapozalco, laments the inconstancy of human greatness, in the person of the tyrant of Tezozomoc, whom he compared to a large and stately tree, which had extended its roots through many countries, and spread the shade of its green branches over all the lands of the empire; but which at last worm-eaten and wasted, fell to the earth, never to resume its verdure. He applied himself to the study of nature, as developed in plants and animals; collecting in his gardens and menageries, all that could endure the climate, and in his cabinets, paintings of all such, as could not be preserved in life. To the excellence and variety of these paintings, the celebrated naturalist Hernandez, bears testimony; and Clavigero justly declares them more worthy of a royal palace, than those which represent the mythology of the Grecians. Like the philosophers of the ancient pagan world, he, politically, paid open respect to the re-

to support it further, we annex the names of the cities charged with these services. The fourteen cities allotted to the first half year, were Tescuco, Huexotla, Coatlican, Atenco, Chiautla, Tezonjocan, Papalotla, Tepetlaoztoc, Acolman, Tepechpan, Xaltocan, Chimalhuacan, Itztapalocan, and Coatpec; the other fifteen, were, Otompan, Aztaquemecan, Teotihuacan, Zempoallon, Axapocheo, Tlalanapan, Tepepolco, Tizajocan, Ahuatepec, Oztoticpac, Quauhltatzinco, Cojoac, Oztotlahuacan, Achichillacachocan, and Tetliztacac.

ligious superstitions of his country; but he taught in secret, his sons, to abhor the worship, and cruel sacrifices offered to lifeless forms. He even prohibited the sacrifice of human victims; and though constrained afterwards to suffer it by the prejudices of his people, he commanded under severe penalties, that it should be confined to prisoners of war. He erected, in honour of the great Creator, a high tower, consisting of nine stories, the uppermost, of which was dark and vaulted, painted within, of a deep blue colour, and ornamented with cornices of gold. From this chamber he observed the course of the planets, and sought to penetrate the mysteries of the heavens. Here, also, resided certain officers, charged with the duty of striking at certain hours, upon plates of the finest metal; at which signal the king kneeled down, and offered his orisons to the great source of all things; in honour of whom, he also observed annually, a solemn feast.\* Under the auspices of such a patron, his capital, Tezcuco, became the nursery of the arts, and the centre of civilization; where the Mexican language was spoken in the greatest purity, and the best artists, poets, painters, orators, and historians abounded.

As a law giver, Nezahualcojotl laboured to correct the disorders occasioned by the usurpations of Tezozomoc and his son, and to promote the civilization of his people. Eighty of his edicts have been collected by the descendant, whom we have already cited. Among these, the provisions for determining litigation, are worthy of high praise. He ordained that no suit, civil or criminal, should

\* For these traits, of the character of this estimable prince, we are indebted to the valuable manuscripts of Don Ferdinand d'Alba, his fourth grandson, who received them most probably by tradition from his ancestors. From the bias which we cannot but feel for the aboriginals, we hope they are not exaggerated.

be prolonged more than eighty days, or four Mexican months; at the end of which period, a session of the judges was held in the palace. Whatever causes were left undecided by inferior tribunals, during the four preceding months, were infallibly concluded on that day; and those who were convicted of any crime, immediately, and without remission, received punishment proportioned to their offence, in presence of the whole assembly. To different crimes, different punishments were assigned, not however, with very nice discrimination; as treason, homicide, adultery, sodomy, theft, and drunkenness, were alike punishable by death. But comparing small things with great, Tezcuco may be called the Athens, and Nezahualcojotl the Solon of Anahuac.

XX. In his last illness he declared his youngest son, Nezahualpilli, born of his Mexican wife, his heir and successor; enjoining his first born, Acapioltzin, to sustain him by his counsel, until he should acquire experience in the art of government; and that his succession might be peaceful and undisputed, he directed him to be proclaimed king, whilst he himself still lived; and his own death to be concealed as long as possible. This was accordingly done, and the body of the deceased monarch, was privately buried. But, though when his death became known, the nobles flocked to the court, to condole with the princes, as no funeral obsequies were publicly performed, the vulgar, ever believed, that their great king had been translated to the gods, in honour of his virtues.

XXI. The high fortune of *Axacajatl*, by exciting the envy of his brother-in-law, Moquihuix king of Tlatelolco, converted that illustrious supporter of the Mexican power, into an active and dangerous enemy. This passion betrayed the unhappy prince to maltreat his wife, the sister of the Mexican mo-



narch; and to conspire with his former foes, to subvert the Mexican state. His hatred too, was inflamed by the exhortations of his priests, whose temples, and whose gods, were rivals of those of the neighbouring city. To rouse the courage of the people, sufficiently to war with their neighbours, an ancient minister of the altar, compounded, a horrible beverage, of the washings of the shrines, which, he gave, purple with human blood, to the king, the nobles, and the army. The queen, who closely observed the workings of her husband's mind penetrated his designs, and flying to the protection of her brother, with her children, informed him fully of the dangers to which he was exposed, and enabled him to take timely measures for his safety. This was one of the most cruel civil wars recorded in Mexican history. The two cities were divided from each other only by name and government; and their inhabitants were of the same blood, separated only by their jealousies. On the day assigned for the ceremony of arming the troops of Tlatelolco, and whilst they were repeating the horrible draught, before mentioned, in the temple of the god of battles, some daring Mexicans entered the market place, killing all they met; but being overpowered, were instantly led to sacrifice. On the same day, and in retaliation of this assault, such was the fury, which burned in the bosoms of the rival population, the women of Tlatelolco, advanced into the streets of Mexico, and set fire to the birch trees before the doors of the houses, and insulted the inhabitants with indecent reproaches. On the next morning, the conflict became general, and the Tlatelolcos, whose allies, accidentally or treacherously, failed them, were driven by the Tenochtitlans from all quarters into the centre of the city, where deprived of space for action, their numbers rendered their destruction more facile. Mo-



quihuix gained the top of the great temple, and sought by shouts and gestures to animate his troops, but they replied by invectives, called him coward, and bade him descend, and take an active part in the battle. At length a Mexican captain cast him headlong from the parapet, and put an end to the war with his life. His body was instantly borne to Axajacatl, who opened his breast and tore out his heart, an offering to the "terrible god." The petty state of Tlatelolco, was thenceforth united to the city of Mexico, having for the space of one hundred and eighteen years, under four monarchs, presented the anomaly of a feeble kingdom within the very grasp of an overshadowing power, sustaining an offensive rivalry.

XXII. Having thus reduced the Tlatelolcos, Axajacatl turned his arms upon their allies, some of whose princes he seized and put to death. He also annexed to his kingdom, the whole valley of Toluca, comprehending many petty states, not, however, without great danger to himself, having been stricken down in battle, and being with great difficulty, preserved from captivity, by the interposition of two of his officers. He received a wound which made him halt for the remainder of his life. In the last years of his reign, he lived solely for the purpose of extending his empire. Passing through the valley of Toluca, and crossing the mountains, he conquered Tochpan and *Tlaximalojan*, which was afterwards, the frontier of the kingdom of Michuacan. Thence returning towards the east, he made himself master of *Ocuilla* and *Malacatepec*. His conquests were interrupted by death, in the thirteenth year of his reign, Anno Domini, one thousand four hundred and seventy-seven. He left a numerous offspring, among whom, was the famous Montezuma the second.

XXIII. Tizoc, the brother of the late king, suc-

ceeded to the throne by election. His reign, was short and obscure. It is recorded of him, however, that he conquered fourteen cities. Some of these were rebellious towns, which he again reduced under the Mexican yoke. A conspiracy was formed against him by his great vassals, and he is said to have perished by sorcery or poison. He died in the fifth year of his reign, with the reputation of a circumspect, but severe monarch. The leisure which he enjoyed, induced him to form the design, of building a great and splendid temple, for which he collected materials, but the execution was prevented by his death. The conspirators were detected, and capitally punished in the presence of his successor, and the king of Tezcucó, and their chief nobles.

XXIV. Notwithstanding the apparent acquiescence of the elder brothers of Nezahualpilli, in his elevation to the throne of Tezcucó, by the will of their father, their discontent soon after declared itself in seditious movements. They first tempted the versatile Chalchese to revolt, but failing in this endeavour, they applied with success to the Huexotzincas. In the war which followed, instructions were given to the soldiers of the enemy, to direct their arms particularly against the person of the king; and high rewards were promised to those who should capture him alive or dead. Nezahualpilli apprized of this design, changed garments with one of his officers. And his representative fell a victim in the first battle, to his loyalty to his prince, whose activity and individual bravery, contributed mainly to the decisive victory which on this occasion he obtained over his foes. His rebellious brothers were either slain in the rencontre, or escaped by flight a merited chastisement.

XXV. The king of Tezcucó, had already several wives, but the honour of becoming his queen,

was reserved for a lady of the royal house of Mexico. He received from Tizoc, one of his granddaughters, who was accompanied to her husband's palace, by a beautiful sister. Of this maiden, named Xocotzin, Nezahualpilli became violently enamoured, and he resolved to raise her also to the dignity of queen. Both nuptials were celebrated with great splendour, but the latter is particularly mentioned by historians, as the most solemn and magnificent, that had ever been known in Anahuac. By his first queen, he had a son called *Cacamitzin*, who succeeded him on the throne, and who being afterwards made prisoner by the Spaniards, died unhappily. By the second, he had *Huexotzincatzin*, of whom we shall hereafter speak; Coanacotzin who was also king: Acolhuacan, who was ordered to be hanged by Cortes, and Ixlixochitl, who confederated with the Spaniards against the Mexicans, was converted to christianity, and baptized by the name and surname of that conqueror.

XXVI. Ahuitzotl, the sole surviving brother of the two preceding kings of Mexico, was now elevated to the throne. He prosecuted the design of Tizoc, in the erection of a temple, and during its progress, which employed four years, went frequently to war; at one time with the Mazahuas, a few miles west, who had rebelled against the crown of Tacuba; at another, against the Zapotecas, three hundred miles distant on the south east; and also against several other nations. When the fabric was finished, he invited the allied kings and their nobles to its dedication. The concourse of people on this occasion, was the greatest ever seen in Mexico. The historians say, doubtless with exaggeration, amounting to six millions. The festival lasted four days, during which there were sacrificed, in the upper porch of the temple, all the prisoners captured in the four preceding years, estimated various-

ly from sixty-four thousand and sixty, to seventy-two thousand, three hundred and forty-four. To render these execrable sacrifices more ostentatious, the prisoners were ranged in double file, a mile and a half in length, reaching from the roads of Tacuba and Itzpalapan, to the temple. This sacriligious butchery, the greatest certainly which superstition has committed throughout the world, was perpetrated in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-six.

From this period, until the year 1502, Ahuitzotl was constantly engaged in military enterprizes; either extending his sway over independent countries, or repressing the insurrection of his tributaries who bore with great impatience the Mexican yoke. In these wars, Montezuma, who was afterwards emperor, and his brother Tezcatzin, were distinguished by their valour and warlike skill. In this reign, the empire attained its greatest extent; her victorious arms having been carried by the general *Tliltotl* to Guatemala, more than nine hundred miles south-west of the city of Mexico. The name of *Ahuitzotl*, had passed into a proverb when the Spaniards entered the country; and was long used to signify a quarrelsome man, who vexed and molested his neighbours, suffering none to live at peace. But he was not wanting in civil virtues. He was magnanimous and liberal. He embellished the city with many new and magnificent buildings; He rewarded all who served him faithfully, by rich presents, of gold, silver, jewels, and precious feathers; and he was accustomed on the receipt of the provincial tributes, to assemble the people, and personally to distribute food and clothing to the necessitous.

The lake of Mexico, as the drain of an extensive valley was, as we have already observed, subject to great vicissitudes of flux and reflux. In

rainy seasons it overflowed its banks, and in dry ones, became so shallow, as to be innavigable. A case of the latter kind occurred, in the year 1498, which the king proposed to remedy, by conducting into the lake the waters of the fountain of Huitzilopochco, which arose in Cojoacan; and he gave orders to Tzotzomatzin, governor of the province, for that purpose. Tzotzomatzin, represented that the fountain was not constant, being sometimes dry whilst at others, it sent forth torrents which might prove injurious to the city. The command was repeated, and the objection being renewed, Ahuitzotl, tyrannically caused his faithful and judicious vassal to be put to death, and the project to be executed with many superstitious ceremonies. The rains of the succeeding year were very abundant, and the city was suddenly overflowed; many houses were destroyed, and the king making his escape from the first story of the palace, struck his head against the top of a low door way, by which he received a contusion that caused his death, in the year 1502. He invoked the aid of the king of Acolhuacan, who without delay, caused the dyke to be repaired, which had been built by the advice of his father, in the reign of Montezuma.

XXVII. We are now to consider the reign of Montezuma *Xocojotzin*, or the younger, the ninth king of Mexico, in whom the great power of his predecessors was united with a pride and splendour, which they had never equalled, and which is scarce surpassed in Asiatic history; and whose misfortunes and humiliations, are singularly contrasted with his preceding greatness.

The late king had no surviving brother, but he left many nephews, from whom, by the laws of the realm, a successor must be selected, all of whom, doubtless, coveted this great dignity. But Montezuma, one of the sons of Axajacatl, who probably



merited it most, by his abilities and services, had rendered himself a favourite with the people, by his gravity, his circumspection, his regard for religion, and above all, by the assumption of profound humility. As a minister of the altar, also, he united the suffrages of the priesthood, now a very numerous and influential order of the state. With such support, he readily obtained the preference over his rivals. Whilst the election was pending he retired to the temple, appearing to think himself unworthy of this high honour, and when the allied kings, attended by the nobles, went thither to announce his elevation, he was employed in the humble office of sweeping the courts of the sanctuary. This specious humility he preserved during the succeeding ceremonies; and though his joy found its way in tears, he replied to their congratulations, with professions of his own unworthiness, and thanks for their favourable opinions.

He obtained the victims for the customary sacrifice at the coronation, by an inroad on the Atlixchese, who, a short time previously, had rebelled against his crown. So splendid were the preparations for this event, that they attracted to Mexico, many foreigners, who had never before, been seen in that city; and even the hostile Tlascalans, and Michuacanese, came in disguise to the spectacle. But when Montezuma had intelligence of this, with a generosity truly royal, he ordered them to be properly lodged and entertained, and caused scaffolds to be erected, from whence they might conveniently view the whole ceremony.

But no sooner was he formally seated upon the throne, than pride, the master passion of his soul, broadly developed itself. His predecessors, when dispensing the official honours of the state, had more regard to the fitness, than the rank, of the candidates, and the plebians, notwithstanding their solemn



destitution of rights in the reign of *Itzcoatl*, were admitted to participate in political services and rewards. But, when he had siezed the reins of government, in despite of the remonstrances of the sagest and most reverend of his counsellors, he stripped them of their employments and dignities; averring that the baseness of their birth, and the meanness of their education, disqualified them for honourable charges.

The changes which he introduced in the economy of his household, and the etiquette of the court, were dictated by the same superb spirit. All his servants were persons of rank. Beside the ordinary attendants of the palace, six hundred feudatory nobles came daily to render him their homage. They passed the whole day in the anti-chamber, conversing in a low voice, and awaiting the orders of their sovereign. The retainers of these lords were so numerous, that they filled the courts appropriated to them, and crowded the adjacent streets. All the great vassals of the crown were required to reside several months of each year, at the court; and on their return to their seignories, to leave their sons, or other relatives, behind, as hostages for their fidelity; on which account they were compelled to keep houses in Mexico.

His seraglio was filled with several hundred women, their servants and slaves, who were guarded with much circumspection and jealousy; and every breach of propriety was punished with the utmost severity. Of these women, the king appropriated to himself such as pleased him; others he gave away, in recompense for the services of his officers.\*

All persons entering the palace, whether in the

\* Some of the Mexican annalists, affirm that Montzuma had one hundred and fifty of his wives pregnant at the same time, *Non bene ripæ creditur.*

royal service, or to confer with the king on business, were required to appear barefooted, and in humble garments, in testimony of their abject condition, and their profound respect for his majesty. On entering the hall of audience, every one bowed lowly three times, saying at the first, *Tlatoani*, lord; at the second, *Notlatocatzin*, my lord; and at the third, *Huitlatoani*, great lord; and then delivered his communication with a low voice and head inclined, receiving the answer of the king through his secretaries, with as much reverence as if it were the voice of an oracle. In taking leave, no one presumed to turn his back upon the throne.

The audience hall served also for the king's dining room. His table was a large pillow, and his seat a low chair. The table cover and napkins were of fine cotton cloth, brilliantly white, and scrupulously clean; and the dinner service for ordinary use, was of the earthenware of Cholula, which was changed for gold plate, on festive occasions. The cups containing his chocolate and other beverages, were of gold, or some beautiful sea shell, or the rind of a fruit, curiously varnished and adorned. The number and variety of the dishes amazed the Spaniards. Cortes says, that they covered the floor of the hall, and consisted of the various kinds of game, fish, fruit, and herbs of the country; and that the meats might not grow cold, each plate was accompanied with its chafing dish. Several hundred noble pages carried the dishes in procession before the king, whilst he sat at table, who indicated with a rod, such as he chose; the rest, were distributed among the nobles of the anti-chamber. Before he began to eat, four of the most beautiful women of his seraglio, served him with water to wash his hands, and together with the six principal ministers and his carver, waited during the meal.

Whilst at table, the door of the hall was closed, that none other of the courtiers might see him eat. The ministers stood at a distance, preserving profound silence, unless when replying to his remarks. He frequently heard music whilst at table, and amused himself with the humours of some deformed jesters, who in this, as in other courts, availed themselves of the favourable opportunity of impressing some important, and oft times, unpleasant truths upon their master. When he had dined, he took tobacco mixed with liquid amber, with the fumes of which he put himself to sleep.

After his siesta, he gave public audience; encouraging those, who from diffidence, were embarrassed in their address. When the business of the day was over, he was entertained by his musicians, who sang the glorious actions of his ancestors, to the accompaniment of their rude instruments; or he amused himself with various games played before him. When he went abroad, he was carried on the shoulders of his nobles, in a litter, covered with a rich canopy, attended by a numerous retinue; and wherever he passed, all persons closed their eyes, as if dazzled with the splendour of his presence. If he alighted from the litter to walk, carpets were spread, that he might not touch the earth with his feet.

The grandeur of his palaces, gardens, and pleasure grounds corresponded with the magnificence of his court. His usual residence was a vast edifice of stone, which had twenty entrances from the public squares and streets; three spacious courts, in one of which, was a beautiful fountain; several halls, and more than an hundred chambers. So great was its extent, that a companion of Cortes, says, that he went four times to view it, and ranged over it until he was fatigued, but could not observe it all. He describes one hall, as sufficiently capa-

cious to contain three thousand persons. The walls of some of the apartments were of marble, and other precious stones. The beams were of cedar cypress, and other odoriferous woods, smoothly finished and elaborately carved. In this pile, there was room, not only for the accommodation of the seraglio, and the officers of the court, but for such guests, as had claims upon the king's hospitality, and especially for the Tezcucan and Tacuban monarchs, and their attendants.

Two large edifices in the city of Mexico, were appropriated as a museum, of various living animals. One contained birds which did not live by prey; the other, birds of prey, quadrupeds, and reptiles. The first was divided into several chambers, with galleries, supported by pillars of marble, each cut from a single block. It looked into a large garden, in which, surrounded by shrubbery, were ten ponds, some of fresh, and some of salt water, which sustained their appropriate birds. The number and variety of birds collected here, struck the Spaniards with wonder. Each was supplied with its natural food, whether seeds, fruits, or insects. The daily consumption of such as fed on fish only, was more than three hundred Roman pounds weight. Three hundred men, says Cortes, were employed in the care of this aviary, besides the physicians, whose duty it was to study and cure the distempers of the birds. Beside the pleasure the king took in viewing this collection, he derived a valuable return from the feathers, which were employed in the celebrated mosaic work of Mexico.

The other edifice, appropriated to the wild animals, had a large court with tessellated pavement, and was also divided into many apartments, adapted to the peculiarities of their several inhabitants. For the support of the birds of prey, there were daily killed, five hundred turkies; and the lions,

tigers, wolves, cayotoos, and wild cats, were fed on deer, hares, rabbits, techichis, and the *intestines of the human sacrifices*.

The king also had in this curious collection, crocodiles, and serpents. Ponds for fish, were also prepared; two of which, may yet remain at the palace of Chapoltepec, two miles from Mexico. Nor was his curiosity gratified in gathering together this multitude of the ordinary productions of nature. He delighted in collecting also, in his palace, all the deformed of his own species, whether distinguished by the colour of their hair, or skin, or other irregular conformation.

His palaces were surrounded with spacious gardens, stored with beautiful flowers, odoriferous herbs, and medicinal plants. Extensive parks were enclosed with walls, and stored with game, which the king frequently hunted. One of these was on an island, in the lake now known among the Spaniards, by the name of Pinon.

Of all these noble improvements, the work of an *illiterate and savage race*, their civilized, humane, and learned conquerors have spared none, save the wood of Chapoltepec, which the Spanish viceroys had preserved for their own recreation. The piety of the christians has razed the most magnificent buildings of antiquity—their industry has found ample employment in wasting the gardens and the groves; and even the existence of these testimonials of an exalted and generous spirit might now be deemed fabulous, but for their own records of the work of destruction.

In his personal habits, Montezuma was a model of cleanliness, and propriety. He bathed daily, and changed his garments four times in the twenty-four hours—and those which he put off were never resumed, but were reserved as presents, for the assiduous noble, or gallant soldier. His love of



order was visible in all around him His palaces, and gardens were kept with perfect care, and the streets of the city were daily cleansed and watered by a thousand scavengers.

His armories were stored with offensive and defensive weapons, with military ornaments and ensigns; and a vast number of artificers were perpetually employed in their fabrication; whilst a no less number were engaged in ornamental arts, such as jewelry, sculpture, painting, and mosaic work.

His zeal for religion, was not less conspicuous than his magnificence. But both were debased by his superstition. He built several temples to his gods, in which he offered frequent sacrifice, observing with great punctuality, all established rites and ceremonies. He was anxiously attentive to the execution of his orders and the laws, punishing inexorably all transgressors. He tried frequently, by secret presents, the integrity of his magistrates, and punished the guilty without remission.

He was an implacable enemy to idleness, keeping his subjects perpetually employed; the military in warlike exercises, and the other classes in the construction of new edifices, highways, and other public works; and even beggars, that they might not be idle, were required to contribute a certain quantity of the vermin which bred amid their filth.

With a liberality and beneficence truly deserving praise, he allotted the city of Colhuacan, as a hospital for all invalids who, having faithfully served the crown, either in military or civil employments, required a provision for their age or infirmities.

But though charitable in relieving the necessitous, and liberal in rewarding all who served him, the burdens, which his arrogance and luxury imposed upon his subjects and tributaries, and the excessive severity with which he punished every act of disobedience, made him the terror of his people, and

prepared the way for the sudden and extraordinary subversion of his empire.

At the commencement of his reign, *Malinalli*, chief of Tlachquiauhic, rose in rebellion, but he was soon reduced, his state reconquered, and himself put to death. About the same period, the petty state of Achiotlan, was also brought under the Mexican power.

XXVIII. Among the many surrounding nations which continually excited the Mexicans to war. Tlascala, though distant scarce sixty miles from the capital, alone, was unsubdued. The good fortune of this republic, which it probably abused, aroused the envy of its neighbours; and its former allies, the Huexotzincas, Cholulans, and others, exasperated the Mexicans against it, by insinuating that the Tlascalans designed to make themselves masters of the maritime provinces on the gulph of Mexico, by commerce with which they daily increased their power and their wealth. Due care was taken by the Mexicans to circumscribe this intercourse,\* and to the remonstrances of the Tlascalans, they insolently replied, that, the king of Mexico was lord of the world, that all mortals were his vassals, and that as such, the Tlascalans should acknowledge him by the payment of tribute, under the penalty of being utterly destroyed, of having their city sacked, and their country transferred to another race. To this vain glorious threat, the Tlascalan ambassador rejoined, "Most potent lords, Tlascala owes you no submission. She is free and will pay tribute to no one, and before she will acknowledge your supremacy, we will shed more blood, than our fathers caused to flow in the

\* The most vexatious effect of this restraint, was the deprivation of salt, which introduced among the common people of Tlascala, the habit of eating their food without this condiment. The nobles procured it by secret commerce with the Mexicans.

famous battle of Pojauhtlan." The Tlascalans, thereupon immediately strengthened their fortifications, and bravely and successfully, resisted every attempt of the neighbouring petty states which were commanded to harrass them; employing with great advantage the arms of the people, who sought refuge amongst them, from Mexican oppression. Not content with repelling the invasion of the Huexotzincas, they invaded the territories of these enemies, and compelled them to implore the succour of Montezuma.

The king dispatched an army to their relief, under the command of his eldest son. The Tlascalans surprised and defeated it with great slaughter, in which the general in chief was included. A new army, directed by Montezuma in person, was also defeated with great loss, and compelled to retreat, leaving an immense spoil in possession of the republicans. The victors celebrated their triumph with great rejoicings, and rewarded the fugitive Otomies, to whom it was chiefly owing, by advancing their captains to the dignity of *Texetli*, and bestowing upon them their daughters in marriage.

Notwithstanding these multiplied successes of the Tlascalans, the Mexican historians assert, that they were indebted for the preservation of their independence, more to the policy of the Mexicans, than to their own intrepidity;—That, whilst that haughty state extended its empire over more distant and more powerful nations, it suffered this petty power to subsist, that it might afford them exercise for their troops, and victims for their sacrifices. We are more inclined to believe, that the conquest was not deemed worth the price that must have been paid for it.

XXIX. The lofty character of the Tlascalans, was nobly illustrated by one of her chiefs, named

Tlahuicol, who was captured by the Mexicans in a war posterior to that of which we have just spoken. He was remarkable for his courage and strength. The *maquahuitl*, or sword with which he fought, could scarce be raised by an ordinary man. His name spread terror and dismay among the enemies of the republic, wherever he appeared in arms. During the heat of an engagement he sunk so deeply in a marsh, that being unable to extricate himself he was made prisoner and delivered in a strong cage to Montezuma. The king magnanimously offered him his liberty, with permission to return to his country. But the proud Tlascalan refused the favour, saying, that after the dishonour of his capture, he shamed to present himself to his countrymen. Still, Montezuma, desirous of his friendship, reserved him from the sacrifice, to which by the custom of his nation he should be devoted; suffered him to call from Tlascala his favourite wife, and promoted him to the command of his army, in a war with Michuacan; in which post he maintained his reputation, bringing off many prisoners, and a large booty in gold and silver. The king again proffered him his freedom, which being again rejected, he proposed to him the most honourable post in his service, the command in chief of the Mexican armies. Tlahuicol nobly answered, that this duty would render him a traitor to his country: and again preferred his oft repeated request, that he might die the gladiatorial sacrifice to which prisoners of high rank were usually condemned. Montezuma retained him three years longer at court, and at length consented to his request, and appointed the day for the ceremony. As splendid preparations were made on this occasion, as for an European tournament. Immense crowds assembled from all parts, to assist at the spectacle. And the prisoner cheerfully ascended the *temalacatl*, or stone

assigned for the combat. Several of the bravest Mexican warriors were selected for the contest, and though Tlahuicol, fought at great disadvantage, having one foot bound to the altar, he killed eight, and wounded twenty others. But exhausted by his own exertions, he at last received a blow which stunned him, and was borne before the idol of Huitzilopochtli, where the priests opened his breast, and taking out his mighty heart, cast the body down the stair of the temple. Thus perished the hero by a death the most honourable, that the country and the age could accord him.

XXX. From the time of his coronation to the advent of the Spaniards, Montezuma was almost annually employed in wars, either reducing rebellious states to their allegiance, or punishing offences in such as had not been wholly subjected. If these wars were not sought for the purpose of procuring victims to his idols, it cannot be doubted that they were encouraged by this abominable superstition; and no preceding monarch, could boast of having offered up a greater number of human lives.

XXXI. In 1504, commenced a series of unfortunate, and extraordinary events, which led to an almost universal presage, of the approaching downfall of the empire, and preyed with so much intensity upon the superstitious mind of the king, as to destroy his repose, and give increased acerbity to his temper. An unchanging drought of two years continuance, caused a famine, which after exhausting the public and private stores of grain, compelled many inhabitants, with the assent of the king, to seek subsistence by removing into other countries. The lightning set fire to one of the towers of the most honoured temple; a circumstance in itself of evil augury, producing much unhappiness to the quarter in which the temple stood; the inhabitants supposing the fire to have



been occasioned by a sudden and hostile inroad, rushed to arms for the public defence, and were punished severely by Montezuma, under the conviction that they meditated a rebellion; an act of injustice which produced in his heart inextinguishable remorse, when he became conscious of their innocence. In the transportation of a large stone prepared with great care and art, as an altar for the greater temple, more commodious for the increased sacrifices, a bridge over one of the canals broke, and the stone fell through, dragging after it the high priest and many others. Another sudden and furious conflagration of the turrets of the principal temple in a calm and serene night.—A violent and extraordinary agitation of the waters of the lake, which destroyed many houses, without wind, earthquake, or other apparent natural cause to which it could be ascribed.—The apparitions of armed figures in the air, who fought and slew each other.—The course of a comet distinctly visible in the heavens:—All conspired to throw the princes of Anahuac into the utmost consternation. Montezuma whose superstition was equalled only by his pride, could not behold these prodigies with indifference. His own astrologers being incompetent to explain the portents, he applied to Nezahualpilli, who had derived from his father and his own study, a profound knowledge of the arts of astrology and divination. That monarch predicted the future disasters of the empire, by the arrival of a new people. Montezuma refused faith to a solution so mortifying to his spirit, and accepted a reference of the explanation to lot, or to the result of a game at ball, to be played between his ally and himself. The umpirage was against him. Still, he appealed, and invoked the judgment of an astrologer, whose fame was co-extensive with Anahuac, and who from some gloomy retreat issued his oracular responses.

But the foreseeing sage could not anticipate his own immediate fate, nor foretel that his confirmation of the Tezcucan's interpretation, would impel the king to topple his house upon his head, and bury him beneath the ruins.

What more could add to the unhappy king's affliction? Even a voice from the grave foretold the dire calamities that awaited him. His most beloved sister, the day after her funeral, in 1508, broke from the cave in which her body had been deposited, and returned to the dwellings of the living. She related a vision she had seen in her trance, in which she beheld the arrival of a strange race of fair complexion, in unknown dresses, with helmets on their heads, carrying standards marked with a cross, who, she was told, would conquer these kingdoms, and introduce the knowledge of the true God, the Creator of the heaven and the earth. This legend owes much no doubt to Spanish embellishment, but it had some foundation in truth, and was represented in the Mexican paintings. Yet as the lady dreamer was the first christian convert, and a legal attestation of her vision was even sent to Madrid, and the paintings may possibly have been the work of the witnesses, we are not required to give it much of our faith. The mind of Montezuma was oppressed by these extraordinary circumstances, and he retired in the deepest affliction to the palace of mourning, to consider and bewail the fugitive nature of human greatness.

XXXII. Beside these imaginary causes of dread, there were others of a substantial nature, which more certainly conducted to the final overthrow of his power. The extensive conquests made by himself and his predecessors, were rapidly gained and feebly consolidated. The oppressive burdens imposed by the pride and ostentation of the king and his ministers, increased the enmity of the conquer-

ed nations, and rendered them so impatient of the yoke, that they availed themselves of every opportunity to cast it from their necks, and to obtain vengeance for its infliction. The power of the empire thus sapped in every quarter, received also a fatal blow, by the revolution in the kingdom of Acolhuacan, which followed the death of Nezahualpilli.

XXXIII. This celebrated prince inherited with his kingdom, the virtues and genius of his father. After a reign of forty-five years, he devolved the government upon two of his sons, and withdrew himself to his *palace of pleasure* in *Tezcotzinco*, with his favourite wife Xocotzin, where he employed himself in the exercise of the chase, and the study of astronomy; having an observatory for the latter purpose, which remained a century after his death, and is mentioned by the Spanish historians. On his return to Tezcucó, feeling the approach of death, he shut himself in his chamber, designing to obtain a like apotheosis as his father, by concealing the time and manner of his dissolution. He expired in 1516, having commanded that his body should be secretly buried; leaving his subjects persuaded that he either had ascended to heaven, or had gone to Amaquemacan, whence his ancestors originated.

His severe love of justice, and regard for the laws, are illustrated by an act, which if the sacrifice of the tenderest charities of nature to the public weal be a virtue, equals the boasted example of patriotism, given by the Roman Brutus. A public edict, forbade on pain of death, the utterance of indecent words in the royal palace. Unhappily the eldest son of the king, by his beloved Xocotzin, violated this law in addressing one of the royal concubines, who preferred her complaint to the father. He inquired whether the words had been spoken in the presence of any other than herself, and

having learned that the youth's tutors were also auditors, and heard their confirmation of the fact, commanded that he should suffer the penalty of his guilt. The whole court, the disconsolate and beloved mother, and Montezuma the king of Mexico, astonished and grieved by this severe sentence, solicited in vain for its remission. "My son," said he, "has broken the law. If I pardon him it will be justly said, that the laws are not alike obligatory on all. My subjects must learn, that their transgressions will not be pardoned, since I do not even spare my son, whom I most dearly love." This severity deeply offended Montezuma, and disgusted the whole kingdom, and the afflicted father mourned for forty days in solitude amid the deepest recesses of his palace, the painful exaction of duty. Notwithstanding the sternness of his justice, the king had a compassionate heart. It was his custom to observe from a latticed window of his palace, the crowds of the market place, and to select and relieve the distressed. He daily distributed alms to the sick and the orphan, and disposed of a large part of his revenue in the endowment of hospitals for the poor and infirm.

XXXIV. An omission to name his successor, originating in his desire to conceal his death, involved his kingdom in fatal feuds which led to its total ruin. The election of a sovereign devolved upon the supreme council of the state, who placed *Cacamatzin*, the son of the first queen, the elder of the Mexican princesses upon the throne. The choice was approved by Coanocotzin the next brother, but was resisted by Ixlilxochitl the youngest, under the pretence that it was made by the influence of Montezuma, whom he represented, truly, as intending to acquire absolute sway over the kingdom of Acolhuacan, and that had the election been made in reference to merit, he himself,

by his courage and talents, had a higher claim to the throne. Cacamatzin was sustained by the countenance and arms of the emperor. But the recusant prince fled to the mountains of Meztitlan, where his ardent eloquence so successfully depicted the art, the rapaciousness, and the cruelty of Montezuma, the subserviency of his brothers to that monarch's wishes and his own patriotism, that he soon found himself at the head of an immense army, estimated at an hundred thousand men. With this force he descended into the plains, and overwhelmed the Otompanese, who opposed him, and captured their city, where he established himself; proclaiming, that he had no design to dethrone his brother, being in arms only to defend his country against the ambitious encroachments of the Mexican power. The pacific Cacamatzin proposed an accommodation, offering to surrender to the aspiring prince, the mountainous districts of the kingdom. This proposition, though not formally accepted, was in effect adopted. And Ixtlilxochitl, with his army ever in motion, maintained an open war with Montezuma; and hovering on the confines of Mexico, kept that city in perpetual alarm, whilst by secret negotiation, he corrupted the courtiers of his adversary, and drew over many of his provinces. He even challenged the emperor to single combat, and probably conceived the design of seizing his throne, in case of a favourable issue. But Montezuma prudently declined a party so unequal. Many battles were fought with various success between the hostile armies. On one occasion, a relation of the king who had gone forth with a declared resolution to capture the prince, and bring him in bonds to Mexico, was himself made prisoner, and the vindictive Ixtlilxochitl, aware of the boast, commanded him to be fettered



and covered with dry reeds, and burned alive in sight of the whole army.

It will be seen in the course of our history, how much this turbulent prince, united with his brother Coanacotzin, contributed to the ruin of his country and the success of the Spaniards, who about this time made their appearance off the coast of the gulph of Mexico. But before we relate the conquest by Cortes, it will be proper to give a more particular account of the religion, the government, the manners, and the arts of the Mexicans.

## CHAPTER VI.

- I. *Introductory remarks....* II. *Singular decorum of the Mexican mythology....* III. *Mexican faith in a Supreme Being.....* IV. *In an Evil Spirit... V. In a future Existence....* VI. *Traditions relative to the Creation, the Flood, and the dispersion of the Nations....* VII. *Numerous divinities of the Mexicans....* VIII. *Of the god Tezcatlipoca....* IX. *Of the Deities Omoteuctli and Omecihuatl....* X. *Cihuacohuatl, or the Mexican Venus....* XI. *Tonatricli, and Meztl, the Sun and Moon....* XII. *Quetzalcoatl, or god of the air....* XIII. *Tlaloc, or the god of water....* XIV. *Calchiuhcueje, or the goddess of water....* XV. *Xiuhteuctli, or the god of fire....* XVI. *Centeotl, or the Mexican Ceres....* XVII. *Michtlanteuctli, and Michtlancihuatl, the infernal deities....* XVIII. *Huitzilopochtli, the Mexican Mars, and the subordinate gods of war....* XIX. *Of the inferior deities....* XX. *Great devotion of the Mexicans....* XXI. *Manner of worship....* XXII. *Mexican temples, great temple at Mexico....* XXIII. *Temples or pyramids of Teotihuacan....* XXIV. *Pyramid of Papantla....* XXV. *Pyramid of Cholula....* XXVI. *Comparison between the pyramids of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres....* XXVII. *Monument of Xochichalco....* XXVIII. *The Mexican Priesthood....* XXIX. *Religious austerities and sacrifices....* XXX. *Of the Mexican calendar, and distribution of time....* XXXI. *Mexican Religious Festivals.*

I. All who partake of the benefits of the christian dispensation, know, that among the innumerable religions of the world, two only are founded in

truth; the theism of the Jews, which during four thousand years of imperfection, constantly looked to a future consummation; and the christian system which by the advent of a redeeming mediator, declared the existence and immensity of that divine mercy, which Judaism, framed chiefly to display the severe attribute of justice, seemed to require. And though, the nature and extent of the mediatorial power have not been so revealed, as to be alike understood by all who profess to believe in its existence, still, the humble and devout christian may hope, that with the second coming of Christ, there will be a light, dispelling the shadows, clouds, and darkness, which rest upon it.

Among the evidences justly invoked to sustain the christian faith, and which, were the miraculous testimonials of its divine origin wanting, would give it the preference above all other creeds, are its simplicity, its sublimity, and its charity.

In the pagan world, even among nations that had attained an enviable distinction in the arts and sciences, the religion of the vulgar was debased by the ascription of the worst of human passions, displayed in their most degrading forms to the deity; by the multiplication of gods, with the increase of human desires and human fears; and by the adoption of ceremonials and forms of worship borrowed from the offerings made to human power.

II. It is not therefore a cause of surprise, that the inhabitants of the half civilized states of Anahuac, should have had ideas of religion, far short of the perfection of christianity; but it is worthy of remark, that whilst they exceeded all other pagans in the cruelty of their superstitions, their religious rites were distinguished by their peculiar and extraordinary decency. The sacrifice of human victims, even upon the most ordinary occasions,

was, indeed, a most execrable feature of their system; but even this enormity may be paralleled in kind, if not in degree, by the practice of the Persians, the Arabians, the Israelites, the Egyptians, the Carthagenians, the Grecians, the Romans, the Iberians or ancient Spaniards, the Gauls, the Britons, the Germans, and above all, by the Scythians, and the nations of central and northern Asia, from whom, the Mexicans may have been remotely descended.

III. The Mexicans believed in a plurality of Gods. But like all other nations who have formed a conception of the attributes of the deity, distributed, personified, and worshipped them, they had an indistinct idea of the aggregation of these attributes in one omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal being, to whom, believing him invisible, they gave no form. They called him simply *Teotl*, or God; a word resembling still more in meaning than in sound, the *Theos* of the Greeks. They applied to him other terms, highly expressive of his grandeur and power; such as *Ipalnemoani*, or “He by whom we live;” *Tloque Nahuàque*, “He who has all in himself.” But they reserved their adoration for the personifications of the several qualities of this Supreme Being, exaggerated and perverted by blind superstition.

IV. They believed, also, in an evil spirit, the enemy of mankind, whom they termed, *Tlacatecolotl*, or rational owl, and represented, as appearing often to men, for the purpose of terrifying or injuring them.

V. They considered the soul of man as immortal, but in this respect they elevated the beasts to an equality with him. Their barbarous neighbours, the Otomies, sunk all animated nature to the level of inanimate matter, believing that all beings perished, with the forms in which they were created.

Thus do extremes meet: the most astute philosopher, and the brutal savage, alike rejecting a future existence.

If the religion of the Mexicans were stained with horrible cruelties in this world, it certainly was more merciful than other *pagan* religions to the souls of men, its victims included, in the next. It distributed departed spirits into three separate habitations; but none were devoted to fierce and unutterable torments. Those who perished in the performance of great duties, such as soldiers in battle, or in the hands of their captors, and women in labour, they sent to the house of the sun, whom they considered the prince of glory, where they led a life of endless delight, having the privilege of animating the clouds, or the bodies of beautiful birds, and of returning to their splendid home again, at pleasure. Thus holding forth as the reward of duty in this life, the pleasures of another world, assured to the virtuous by other and more perfect systems of theology. A faith, peculiar to the Tlascalans, taught that the souls of persons of rank, inhabited after death the bodies of beautiful and sweet singing birds, and of the nobler quadrupeds; while the souls of inferior persons passed into weasels, beetles, and such meaner animals. The only aristocracy that we recollect, which carried the distinction of classes into the other world. Thus, it would seem that the transmigration of souls, the original idea of which is ascribed to Pythagoras, was a familiar notion amongst some barbarians, and was cherished at the same time in both extremities of the world, in either India. To the souls of those who were drowned, struck by lightning, or who died by dropsy, tumours, or wounds, and to the souls of children, especially those sacrificed to Tlaloc, the god of water, they assigned a cool and delightful place, called *Tla-*



*loccan*, the residence of that god, where they enjoyed the most delicious repasts, with every other species of pleasure. In the inner part of the great temple at Mexico, there was a particular place where it was supposed, on certain days of the year, the spirits of the children sacrificed to Tlaloc, invisibly assisted at the sacrifice. The souls of those who died any other death were sent to *Mictlan* or hell, a place of utter darkness in the centre of the earth, over which reigned the god *Mictlanteuctli*, and the goddess *Mictlancihuatl*; but they were not destined to any other punishment than the gloom of their abode. The Miztecas believed like the Romans, that there was an entrance to their paradise from a cavern in the earth, and their nobles caused themselves to be buried in the vicinity of this portal.

VI. The Mexicans had a tradition of the creation of the world, the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of the nations; and these events it is said were represented in their pictures. From the deluge one man and one woman only were saved in a small bark, who landing on the mountain Colhuacan, had there many children, all of whom continued dumb, until they were taught to speak by a dove; but as each received a language different from the others, they were unable to comprehend one another. The philosophers of Tlascalan asserted, that the men who survived the deluge were transformed into apes, but recovered speech and reason by degrees.

VII. The people of Anahuac created deities for the principal subjects of nature, and the chief avocations of life; and fell not very far short of the number of the gods of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, or the nations of Eastern Asia. They had however thirteen principal or greater gods, in honour of whom they consecrated that number.

VIII. After the supreme invisible God, *Teotl*, *Tezcatlipoca*, (or shining mirror,) was the greatest. He was the god of providence, the soul of the world, the creator of heaven and earth, and the master of all things. This was certainly a personification of the chief attributes of the Supreme Being, and they depicted him under the form of a youth, upon whom time made no change. He rewarded the just with benefits, and punished the wicked with diseases and other inflictions. Stone seats were placed in the corners of the streets for him to rest on, upon which no person presumed to sit.

His principal image was of *teotetl*, (divine stone,) black and shining as marble, and always richly dressed. It had golden ear rings, and from the under lip hung a crystal tube, containing a green feather or turquoise stone, which had the semblance of a gem. His hair was tied with a golden string, from which was suspended an ear of the same metal, having ascending smoke painted upon it, intended to represent the prayers of the distressed. The breast was covered with massy gold; an emerald filled the naval, golden bracelets encircled the arms, and one hand held a golden fan set round with beautiful feathers, and polished like a mirror, in which he was supposed to see every thing that happened in the world. At other times, to denote his justice, he was represented sitting on a bench covered with red cloth, upon which were painted skulls, and bones of the dead; upon his left arm a shield with four arrows, and his right in the attitude of casting a spear, his body dyed black, and his head crowned with quail feathers.

IX. *Ometeuctli*, and *Omecihuatl*, the former a god and the latter a goddess, were beneficent deities inhabiting a splendid city of heaven, who watched over the world and were specially kind

to their votaries. Tradition asserts, that this goddess, after having borne many children, was delivered of a knife of flint, which her offspring indignantly cast to the earth, and from which sprung sixteen hundred heroes. Mankind having been destroyed by some general calamity, this heaven descended race aware of their high origin and disdainng to wait upon themselves, demanded power from their mother to create men for their service. She sent them to Mictlanteuchtli, the infernal deity to obtain a bone of the departed race, which when sprinkled with their own blood, should produce a new pair, who would again re-people the earth; warning them at the same time to beware, lest the evil spirit repenting his gift, should endeavour to resume it. Xolotl the hero selected for this mission having obtained his boon, hastened with it towards the surface of the earth, followed by the repentant donor. In his flight he unhappily stumbled, and falling, broke the bone into unequal pieces, but gathering them together he outstripped his pursuer and brought them to his brethren. The fragments were placed in a vessel, and during four days the creators sprinkled them with blood drawn from different parts of their bodies. At the end of that period a boy, and after three days more of like oblation, a girl was formed, who were consigned to the paternal care of Xolotl, and were reared by him on the milk of the thistle. This pair replenished the earth, and from the manner of their creation, was derived the religious ceremony of offering blood drawn from different parts of the bodies of those who afterwards worshipped the gods. The difference in the statures of men was supposed to have been occasioned by the inequality of the pieces of bone. What preference in point of imagination do the heathen fables of Deucalion and

Pyrrha, and of Cadmus and the serpents teeth, merit over these?

X. *Cihuacohuatl*, (woman serpent,) likewise called *Quilaztli*, was the Venus of the Mexicans, who was justly adored as the first and great progenitrix of the human race. Her fecundity was such, that she always bore twins, and she was ever represented with an infant in her arms.

XI. *Tonatrichi*, and *Meztli*, were names of the sun and moon, both deified by these nations, to whom they assert existence was given after the following manner. The earth having been re-peopled as above related, the heroes or demi-gods, though supplied by servants, yet groped about in darkness, the ancient sun having been extinguished. To produce another luminary, they assembled in Teotihuacan around a great fire, and said to their vassals that he who should cast himself into the flame, would attain the glory of becoming a sun. Instantly *Nanahuatzin*, a bold and ambitious man, sprang into the flames and descended into hell. Whilst expecting the event the heroes wagered with the quails, locusts, and other animals, on the quarter of the sun's appearance; and the animals being mistaken in their conjectures were immediately sacrificed. At length the sun arose in the quarter since termed the *levant*; but scarce had he appeared above the horizon, than he delayed his course, and refused to proceed until he had seen all the heroes put to death. They were provoked and terrified by this reply; and one named *Citli* seized his bow, and three arrows, which he shot at the sun, who dexterously shunning them, returned the last dart upon his assailant, struck him in the forehead and instantly slew him. Intimidated by the fate of their brother, and unable to cope with their great adversary, the rest resolved to die by the hands of *Xolotl*, who having performed this melancholy

office, put an end to his own life. Certain garments preserved by the Indians with great care at the period of the conquest, were said to have been the habiliments of these demi-gods. To remove the melancholy which settled on the human race from these disasters, *Tezcatlipoca* commanded one of them to bring music from the house of the sun to celebrate his festival, and prepared the way of the messenger by a bridge of whales and tortoises, desiring him as he went, to chaunt a song which he gave him. In these events originated the sacrifice of quails to the sun, the immolation of human victims, and the music and dancing with which the Mexicans celebrated the festivals of their gods.

By the same means, the moon was also created. But when *Tezcociztecal* plunged into the flames, their fierceness had somewhat abated, and he, therefore, became less brilliant than the sun. To these deities the temples in the plain of *Teotihuacan*, of which we shall hereafter speak, were erected.

XII. *Quetzalcoatl* or Green Feathered Serpent, was the god of the air, and the most mysterious being of the Mexican mythology. He was once the high priest of Tula, and is represented as a tall, large man, of *fair complexion*, open forehead, large eyes, long black hair, and *thick beard*; and is always painted in a long robe, on account of his delicate sense of propriety. His was the age of gold in Anahuac, the reign of industry, and the birth of the arts. And his wealth was so abundant that he erected his palaces of silver, and adorned them with precious stones. He taught the cutting of gems, and like Tubal-Cain, was the first worker in metals. He was himself a model of virtue, and the excellence of his wisdom shone in his laws. These he proclaimed from the mountain Tzatzitepec, (the hill of shouting,) near the city of Tula,



by means of a crier, whose voice was heard three hundred miles. He was averse to war and cruelty; was the author of the milder rites and ceremonies of religion, the distributor of the seasons, and the inventor of the calendar. Under his auspices, his subjects led a life of abundance and pleasure, the corn grew so luxuriantly, that a single ear was a load for a man; gourds were five feet long, cotton grew naturally of all colours, and other fruits and seeds were wonderful in their abundance and size. He was in truth a second Saturn, without the irregular appetite or stupidity of the first, and like his prototype, he, too was doomed to exile.

Amid all this prosperity, *Tezcatlipoca* appeared to him under the form of an old man, and communicated the will of the gods that he should be translated to the kingdom of *Tlapallan*; and presented to him a beverage of which he had no sooner drank, than he felt such an irresistible desire to visit that country, that he set out instantly, accompanied by many of his subjects, who cheered his way with music. Near the city of *Quauhtitlan*, he felled a tree by the cast of a stone, which remained imbedded in the trunk; and near *Tlalnepantla*, he left the imprint of his hand upon a rock, which the Mexicans showed to the Spaniards after the conquest. The Cholulans detained him for a season to preside over their state and to teach them a portion of the beneficial arts he had invented. After a residence here of twenty years, he resumed his journey towards the imaginary realm of *Tlapalla*, attended by four noble and virtuous youths, whom he afterwards dismissed, to assure their countrymen of his return. From respect to his memory the Cholulans received these young men as their rulers. The manner of *Quetzalcoatl's* disappearance from the earth is unknown. He was deified by the Toltecas, and became the guar-

dian of their city of Cholula, where a great pyramid crowned by a sanctuary, was erected to his honour; thence the worship of this beneficent god extended over the whole country. The people of Cholula preserved some small green stones, exceedingly well cut, which they said were finished by him. The nobles of Yucatan, boasted their descent from him; barren women prayed him to remove their sterility; festivals were celebrated in his remembrance, particularly in the Teoxihuitl or divine year, but they were degraded by a severe precedent fast of eight days, and by dreadful austerities, introduced in latter years by the priests consecrated to his worship. He is called the precursor of the god of water, because in these countries rain is generally preceded by wind. The learned Doctor Seguenza, with more zeal than judgment, has sought to identify this amiable deity, with the christian apostle St. Thomas, who, he asserts, announced the gospel to the Mexicans.

The belief that the gospel had been preached to the nations of Anahuac, some centuries before their discovery by the Spaniards, was sustained by several Mexican writers, by a reference to their fasts, and some other religious ceremonies, but especially by the crosses erected in several places throughout the country.\*

Quetzalcoatl introduced the custom of piercing the lips and the ears, and lacerating the body with

\* The crosses most noted, were those of Yucatan (the tradition relating to which, we have recorded in the first volume of our general history,) of Mizteca, Queretaro, Tepique, and Tianquistepec. The crosses of Mizteca and Tianquistepec, are noted by Boturini, in his work; and the former also, by Father Burgoa, a Dominican. An account of that of Queretaro, is given by a Franciscan of the college of Propaganda in that city; and of that of Tepique, by the learned Jesuit, Sigismund Tarabal, whose manuscripts are preserved in the Jesuit college of Guadalajara.

the prickles of the agave, and putting reeds into the wounds. In a Mexican drawing in the Vatican library at Rome, is a figure representing him appeasing by penance the wrath of the gods, when thirteen thousand and sixty years after the creation of the world (according to the vague chronology of Rios,) a great famine prevailed in the province of Culan. The saint had chosen his place of retirement near the Tlaxapuchicalco, on the volcano Catcitetpetl, (*speaking mountain*,) where he walked barefoot on the pointed agave leaves. "We seem," says Humboldt, "to behold one of those *Rishi*, hermits of the Ganges, whose pious austerity is celebrated in the Pouranas."\*\*

It was the posterity of this saint, whom the unhappy Montezuma thought he recognized in the Spaniards. "We know by our books," said he, in his first interview with Cortes, "that we who inhabit this country, are not natives, but strangers who came from a great distance. We know also, that the chief who led our ancestors hither, returned for a certain time to his primitive country, and thence came back to seek those who were here established. He found them married to the women of this land, having a numerous posterity, and living in cities which they had built. Our ancestors hearkened not to their ancient master, and he returned alone. We have always believed that his descendants would one day come to take possession of this country. Since you arrive from that country where the sun rises; and as you assure me, you have long known us, I cannot doubt, but that the king, who sends you, is our natural master.†"

A remarkable tradition still exists among the indians of Cholula, according to which, the great pyramid was not originally destined for the wor-

\* Humboldt's Researches, vol. 1.

† First Letter of Cortes.

ship of Quetzalcoatl, "Before the great inundation which took place four thousand, eight hundred years after the creation of the world, the country of Anahuac was inhabited by giants. (*Tzocuilixequé.*) All who did not perish in the flood were transformed into fishes, save seven, who found refuge in caverns. When the waters subsided, one of these, Xelhua, surnamed the Architect, went to Cholollan, where in commemoration of his preservation in the mountain Tlaloc, he raised an artificial hill of a pyramidal form. The bricks for which, he directed to be made in the province of Tlamanalco, at the foot of the Sierra of Cocotl, and to convey them to Cholula he placed a file of men, who passed them from hand to hand. The gods beheld with anger this edifice, whose summit was designed to reach the clouds, and they poured upon it streams of celestial fire. Many of the workmen perished; the work was discontinued, and the monument was afterwards dedicated to Quetzalcoatl." This history has a striking similarity to the ancient traditions of the east, recorded in the sacred book of the Jews.

The Cholulans preserved a stone, which enveloped in a ball of fire, had fallen from the clouds on the top of the pyramid. This aerolite had the figure of a toad. Pedro de los Rios, a Dominican monk, who has recorded this tradition in a manuscript, deposited in the vatican, and who in 1506, copied on the plain of the pyramid, all the hieroglyphical paintings he could procure, in order to prove the high antiquity of the fable of Xelhua, observes that it was contained in a hymn which the Cholulans sung at their festivals, dancing round their Teocalli, and that the hymn began with the words, *Tulanian hulalæz*; words belonging to no dialect at present known in Mexico. Thus on the ridge of the Cordillera, as well as in the Isle of

Samothrace in the Egean Sea, fragments of primitive languages are preserved in religious rites.\*

XIII. *Tlaloc* or *Tlalocateuctli*, (Master of Paradise,) was the god of water, the fertilizer of the earth, and protector of temporal goods. He resided on the highest mountains where the clouds are generally formed; whither his worshippers often went to implore his protection. His image of white and very light stone, seated on a square rock with a vessel before him filled with elastic gum, and seeds was found by the Acolhuas on the top of Mount Tlaloc, at their arrival in the country in the reign of the first Chechemecan king. This image, the most ancient in Anahuac, had been placed there by the Toltecas, and remained until the end of the fifteenth, or the commencement of the sixteenth century, when another of hard black stone was substituted for it by Nezahualpilli, king of Acolhuacan, who removed the first to his city. The new statue however, was defaced by lightning and the priests declaring it to be a signal of the anger of heaven, the first image was restored, and received the public worship until it was broken, by order of the first bishop of Mexico. This god had his subalterns, who were also the gods of the mountains, and were called after their chief. The image of Tlaloc was painted blue and green, expressive of the colours of water. He held in his hand an undulated and pointed rod of gold, denoting lightning. His temple in Mexico was within the enclosure of the greater temple where several festivals in his honour were annually celebrated.

XIV. *Chalchiuhcueje* or *Chalchihuitlicue*, was the goddess of water, and the companion of Tlaloc. She was known also by other names expressive of the effects of water, or the changes which that ele-

\* Humboldt, Researches, vol. 1. 97.



ment undergoes in motion. The Tlascalans called her *Matlalcueje* or "clad in green," the name they gave to their highest mountain, on whose summits are formed those stormy clouds which burst over the city of *Angelopoli*, and upon whose apex the inhabitants offered their sacrifices.

XV. *Xiuhteuctli* or *Ixcozauhqui*, (Master of the year and of the herbage,) was also the god of fire, to whom the Mexicans paid great adoration. At their principal meal, before eating, they made him an offering of meat and drink, casting both into the fire, and they also burned incense before him at certain hours of the day. They held in his honour two solemn stated festivals annually, one in the tenth and another in the eighteenth month; and one moveable feast, at which the ordinary magistrates were inducted into office, and the investiture of the fiefs of the kingdom were renewed.

XVI. *Centeotl* or *Tonacajohua*, or the supporter, was the Ceres of the Mexicans, who erected five temples to her in their city, and celebrated in her honour, three annual festivals, in the third, eighth, and eleventh months. She was viewed by the whole nation of the Totonacas as their chief protectress, as a clement and beneficent parent; whom they worshipped in a temple on the top of a high mountain, by the sacrifice of doves, quails, leverets, and similar animals only; and they expected from her their final deliverance from the tyranny of other gods, who exacted the blood of human victims. The Mexicans, who delighted to bathe their gods in sanguine tides, poured even upon her altars streams of human blood. Her temple, among the Totonacas, was renowned for its oracles.

XVII. *Michtlanteuctli*, the god of hell, and *Michtlancihuatl*, his female companion, were supposed to dwell in darkness in the bowels of the earth. They had a temple in Mexico, and a festi-

val was holden in their honour in the eighteenth month. They were worshipped always in the night and their altar was served by a priest, whose skin was dyed black, as an appropriate livery of his office.

XVIII. *Huitzilopochtli* or *Mexitli*, the Mars or god of war, whom we have already had frequent occasion to mention, was the most terrible of all the deities of Anahuac, and was adored by the Mexicans proper as their chief protector. By some of his worshippers he was held to be a pure spirit, by others an incarnation of the deity, generated by supernatural means, which they thus describe. There lived in Coatepec, a place near to the ancient city of Tula, a woman called *Coalicue*, who was devoted to the worship of the gods. One day whilst employed in the temple, she beheld descending in the air a ball of various feathers, which she seized and placed in her bosom, intending to employ the feathers in the decoration of the altar. But when she sought it, she was greatly surprised not to find it; and her astonishment was much increased, on discovering from that moment that she was pregnant. Her children on beholding their mother's state, although they did not suspect her virtue, were fearful of disgrace, which they resolved to avert by putting her to death. She divined their intention, but whilst lamenting her fate, she heard a voice from her womb, crying, "Fear not mother, I shall redeem you, with honour to yourself, and glory to me." And whilst her sons, animated by their cruel sister, prepared to execute their purpose, *Huitzilopochtli* was born, with a shield in his left hand, a spear in his right, a crest of green feathers on his head, his left leg adorned with plumes, and his face, arms, and thighs, marked with blue lines. As soon as he entered the world he displayed a twisted pine, which he put into the hands of an

attendant soldier, who appeared at his will, commanding him to sell with it *Cojolxauhqui* the daughter, as the most guilty, whilst he attacked the sons, and in despite of their resistance and entreaties, killed them all, plundered their houses, and presented the spoil to their mother. This terrific event, procured for him amongst men, the name *Tetzauhteotl* the terrible god.

He became the protector of the Mexican nation, conducted it during the many years of its pilgrimage, and finally founded the great city of Mexico. In gratitude to him, the people raised that superb temple, highly celebrated even by the Spaniards, in which were annually holden three solemn festivals, in the fifth, and fifteenth months, beside others celebrated every four, every thirteen years, and at the commencement of every cycle. His statue was of gigantic size, seated on a blue coloured throne, from whose corners issued four huge snakes. His forehead was painted blue, but his face and the back of his head, were concealed beneath golden masks. His head was surmounted by a beautiful crest shaped like the beak of a bird; from his neck hung a collar consisting of ten figures of the human heart; his right hand held a large, blue, twisted club, his left, a shield, on which appeared five balls of feathers, disposed in form of a cross; and from its upper part rose a golden banner bearing four arrows, that had descended from heaven to enable the Mexicans to perform the actions which grace their history. His body was girt with a large golden snake, and adorned with figures of other animals, in gold and precious stones, each of which had an appropriate and peculiar meaning. The state never deliberated on war without imploring his protection with prayers and sacrifices; and the number of human victims offered at his shrine was far

greater than that presented to any other of the gods.

There were two other but subordinate gods of war; one the brother of Huitzilopochtli, who bore the almost unutterable name of *Tlacahuepancuetzcin*, who was also worshipped in the sanctuary of Mexico, but principally at the court of Tezcucó. The other called *Painalton* or the swift, was invoked only in cases of emergency; such as a sudden attack of the enemy, when his priests ran about the city with his image, calling on him with loud cries, and sacrifices of quails and other animals; upon which every soldier was obliged to run to arms.

These were the chief deities of the Mexicans, the others we shall mention were more obscure and of less consideration.

XIX. *Joalteuctli* the god of night, and *Joalticiltl* the goddess of cradles, were the guardian genii of infancy; *Ilamateuctli* or the old lady, was the comforter of senility; *Tepitoton* were penates or household gods, whose little effigies were found in every dwelling, and in every street. Of these, the king and his principal ministers had each six, the inferior nobility four, and the plebians two. *Jacateuctli* was the Mercury or god of commerce; *Xipe*, the patron of the goldsmiths and jewellers, who were remarkable for the cruelty of their bi-monthly sacrifices; *Nappateuctli* or four times lord, the protector of the weavers, a benign god, generous and easy to be entreated. *Opochtli* the guardian of fishermen, who was also worshipped in *Cuiclahuac*, a city in the lake of Chalco, under the name of *Amimiltl*. He was the inventor of nets, and other implements of the piscatory art. *Mixcoatl* was the Diana or goddess of the chase, much worshipped by the Otomies of the mountains, and by the Malatzincas. She had two temples in Mexico, in

which appropriate sacrifices of animals were offered in every fourteenth month. *Huixtocihuatl* the goddess of salt, presided over the saline works erected by the Mexicans, at a short distance from the capital. *Tzapotlatenan* was the goddess of physic, the discoverer of the oil called *Oxiti* and other drugs. She was annually honoured by hymns of praise, and strange to say, by the sacrifice of human victims. *Ixtlilton*, (the black faced,) was also a medical deity, who ministered to sickly children that danced before his shrine, and repeated the prayers dictated by their parents, and drank of a water blessed by the priests, and dedicated to the god. *Coatlicue* the Flora or goddess of flowers, was adored by the gardeners and florists, who adorned her statue with the bright and odoriferous garlands of the Spring. She was considered by some as the mother of *Huitzilopochtli*.

*Tonantzin*, (our mother,) appears to be the same with *Centeotl*. Her temple on a mountain three miles north of Mexico, was crowded by the nations who came to worship her, with a prodigious number of sacrifices. "At the foot of that hill," says Clavigero, "there is now the most famous sanctuary of the new world, dedicated to the true God, where people from the most remote countries assemble to worship the celebrated and truly miraculous image of the most holy lady of *Guadaloupe*, thus converting a place of abomination into a mercy seat." Humanity must delight in the change of the sacrifice, but philosophy cannot pride herself on the substitution of the shrine.

*Teteoinan* was the mother of the gods, whose cruel apotheosis we have already related. She was also called *Tocitzin*, our grandmother; and was adored by the *Tlascalans* as the protectress of midwives.

Finally, whilst we observe that the Mexicans were scarce surpassed by any other pagan nation,



or by the christians in the dark ages of our faith, by the number of the objects of worship, having one deity at least for every day in the year, we shall notice here only three others. *Tlazolteotl* was specially invoked for the remission of sins; but chiefly it would seem by the lecherous who courted his favour with sacrifices, and offerings. *Texcatzoncatl* the god of wine, was also known by the names of the *Strangler* and *Drowner*. He had not less than four hundred priests devoted to his service, who celebrated in the thirteenth month an annual festival to him, and other gods, his companions. *Omacatl* was the god of mirth, whose image was set up at the great festivals of the Mexican nobles, that he might preserve temperance and good fellowship among them.

XX. All these gods, emblems of the various attributes of the great Creator were adored throughout Anahuac, with a devotion which varied with the peculiar circumstances or dispositions of the several nations. Their number was almost infinite, for beside those universally worshipped in the temples, every mountain, vale, river, grove, garden, and dwelling, had its tutelary spirit, to whom incense was offered. And had their worship been unstained by human blood, we might consider these personifications of passions, pains and pleasures as evidences of the imagination, the sensibility and the gratitude of the people, and bestow upon them the praise which we award to the genius of the heathen mythology. Zumarraga first bishop of Mexico asserts that the Franciscans, had in eight years, broken more than twenty thousand idols; and that number was inconsiderable when compared with those contained in the capital only. They were generally made of stone, wood, or clay, but sometimes also of gold and other metals, and of gems. In a high mountain of Mizteca, Fernandes, a Do-

minican missionary, found a small idol called by the natives the *heart of the people*. It was made of a single emerald four inches long and two broad, upon which was engraved the figure of a bird, encircled by a serpent. Some curious, and more enlightened of his countrymen, would have purchased this sacred gem at a high price, but the zealous father very solemnly reduced it to powder before all the people. The most extraordinary object of worship among the Mexicans was a representation of *Huitzilopochtli*, made of certain seeds cemented together with human blood. Almost all the idols were coarsely formed, and rendered hideous by the fantastical parts of which they were composed in order to represent their attributes and employments.

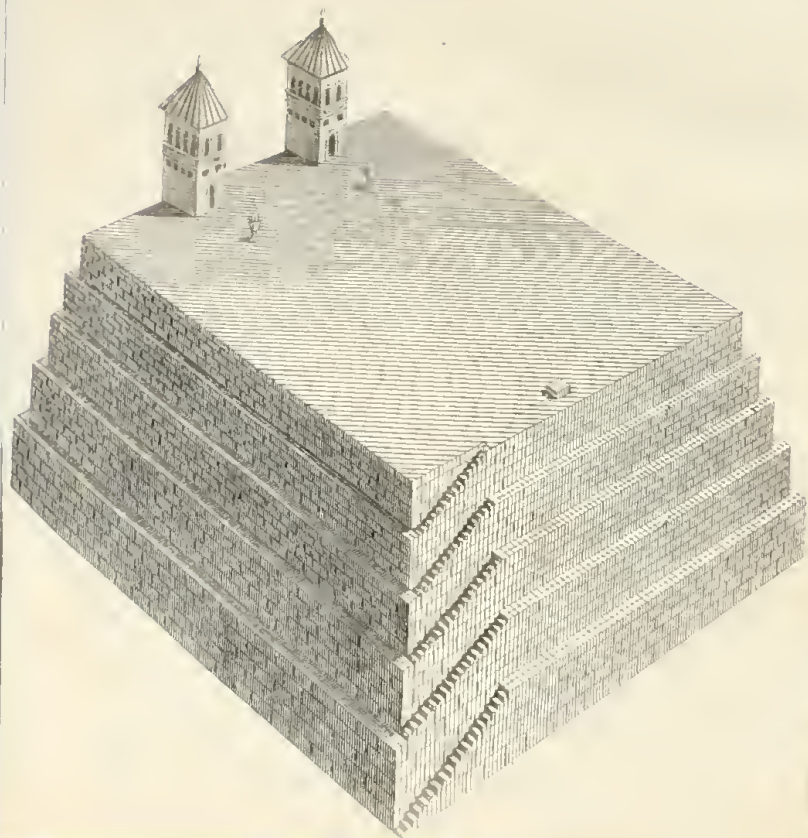
XXI. The Mexicans worshipped their gods by genuflections and prostrations, by vows, fasts, and prayers, by offerings of incense and animal victims and by various rites, some common to other nations, and some peculiar to themselves. When praying, they turned their faces towards the east, and they had therefore the entrance to their temples from the west. They frequently confirmed the truth of their declarations by an oath, saying *Cuix à mo nechitta in Toteotzin?* *Does not our god see me now?* Then naming the deity whom he most revered, the juror kissed his hand after having touched, with it, the earth. This formula, even when made by a person accused of crime, in attestation of his innocence, was received with great respect; it being supposed that none would dare the vengeance of heaven by taking the name of God in vain.

It has been justly remarked, that the mythology of this people had more purity and sublimity than that of the Greeks and Romans. It affords few instances of ridiculous actions, and none of those

scandalous scenes in which the latter have placed the objects of their worship. Nothing of that abominable display of the grossest of human passions, which, as examples of divine conduct, must have corrupted the nations of Europe and Asia, is to be found in the Mexican system. The gods of the latter were emblems of virtue; they were types of beneficence, of courage, of chastity, of prudence, and of industry. Every rite tended to render them propitious, only, to penitents. Hence, their worshippers were not content, with offerings and victims, but they brought to the altar contrite and penitent hearts.

XXII. The Mexicans called their temples *Teocalli*, the house of god, and *Teopan*, the place of god. The following description of the great temple, the wonder of the conquerors is compiled after a comparison of all the authors who have treated of it, and is sustained by the testimony of four eye witnesses, Cortes, Bernal Diaz, the writer called the Anonymous Conqueror, and *Sahagun*. This great building, which should give us a very favourable idea of the genius of the Mexicans, occupied the centre of their city, and an area within which, Cortes affirms, a town of five hundred houses might have stood. It was enclosed by a wall eight feet high, crowned with battlements in the form of niches, and ornamented with many stone figures of serpents; whence it received the name of *Coatepanlli* or the wall of serpents. Four gates, fronting the cardinal points, looked into the four principal streets of the city. Over each gate was an arsenal filled with arms. The space within the walls was curiously paved, with such smooth and polished stones, that the Spanish horses could not move on them safely. The *Teocalli* proper, was of earth, encased with stone, and consisted of five stories or terraces. The first was more than fifty perches long from east to west, and about forty-three in







breadth from north to south; the other terraces had the same height as the first, but diminished each about a perch in length and breadth, leaving a space at the base of each terrace, on which several men might walk abreast.\*

The stairs which were on the south, were formed of large, well cut stones, and consisted of one hundred and fourteen steps, each a foot high, not one continued flight, but running from story to story, as represented in the annexed plate, so that on attaining the top of one story, it was necessary to go round the base of the next before that could be surmounted. The topmost area, forty-three perches long, and thirty-four broad, was paved in the same manner as the circumjacent space below. At its eastern extremity, were two towers fifty-six feet high, each of three stories, the lower ones of masonry, and the upper of wood, neatly constructed and painted. The lower stories were the proper sanctuaries, in which, upon altars of stone five feet high, were placed the statues of the divinities. One was sacred to Huitzilopochtli and the gods of war, and the other to Tezcatlipoca. The upper stories contained the vessels and instruments employed in worship, and the ashes of kings and distinguished nobles. The entrances to the sanctuaries were from the west. These towers were crowned with cupolas of wood of beautiful workmanship, and offered from their summits one of the finest prospects in the world, comprehending the lake, the greater part of the Vale of Mexico with its numerous cities.

The altar for ordinary sacrifice was in the upper area, and that for the gladiatorial ones in the lower. Before the sanctuaries stood two stone stoves, about five feet six inches high, in the form of the

\* This perch is eight feet and a fraction

pyx or vase used in the catholic worship, in which a sacred fire was preserved with the utmost care, from the belief that the vengeance of heaven would follow its extinction.

In the space between the wall and the greater temple, were places for the religious dances, more than forty lesser temples, several colleges of priests, seminaries for the youth of both sexes, and many other buildings, some of which on account of their singularity merit attention. The most remarkable were the temples of Tescatlipoca, Tlaloc, and Quetzalcoatl. The two first resembled each other in form, but differed in dimensions, and all fronted the great temple, whilst the religious structures without the area, looked to the west. The temple of Quetzalcoatl was round, the others quadrangular. The door of this, was the mouth of an enormous serpent, of stone, armed with fangs; its interior, by the report of those Spaniards who entered it, was a complication of horrors. There was here also, a temple called *Ilhuicatitlan*, dedicated to the planet Venus, in which was a great pillar with the figure of that star painted upon it; near which, at the time of her appearance, prisoners of war were sacrificed. Another temple was called Tezcacalli or the *house of mirrors*, on account of its walls being covered on the inside with plates of obsidian, or volcanic glass. The temple of *Teocizcalli*, was adorned with rich and splendid shells, and had annexed a house, where the king habitually retired to fast and pray. Here also, was a house of entertainment for strangers, who visited the city from devotion or curiosity; ponds or baths, and fountains, some of which were deemed holy; aviaries and flower gardens, and a grove where hills, rocks, and precipices, were artfully represented, from which the general chase we shall hereafter describe was commenced.

Here were buildings devoted to the preserva-

tion of the idols, the ornaments and the furniture of the temples; and among them three halls of astonishing magnitude, and a prison constructed like a cage, for the confinement of the idols of the conquered nations. There were other buildings as horrible as they were curious, in which were collected the heads of victims, thrown together in some places indiscriminately, and in others arranged with care and art. But the most considerable edifice of this kind, was without the walls, and opposite to the great gate. It was called *Huitzompan*, and consisted of a prodigious oblong rampart of earth, in the form of a truncated pyramid, one hundred and fifty-four Parisian feet long at the base; the ascent to the plain at the top, was by a flight of stairs of thirty steps. Upon this plain were planted, about four feet asunder, more than seventy posts, bored with holes, through which sticks passed, connecting them together, from each of which a number of heads were strung by the temples. Upon the steps also, a head was placed between every stone; and at each end of the edifice was erected a tower of skulls, cemented with lime, which the priests kept in constant repair, supplying the place of the decayed bones by fresh ones from the promiscuous heaps. The skulls of ordinary victims were scalped, but those of distinguished personages, were preserved with the skin, beard, and hair entire, which rendered them the most frightful trophies of a barbarous superstition. Some of the Spaniards who reckoned only the heads in a part of these buildings, report, that they counted one hundred and thirty-six thousand.\*

\* The site of this temple, is now the great public square of Mexico. The ancient city was totally destroyed during the siege by the Spaniards in 1521. The new city was rebuilt by Cortes, on the ruins of the old. The square is surrounded by palaces and public buildings, and was adorned by an eques-

Other temples were distributed in various quarters of the city of Mexico, and their number has been estimated at two thousand, and that of the towers at three hundred and sixty. The size of many of these edifices was very great, but that of Tlatelolco consecrated also to Huitzilopochtli rose above them all.

Out of the capital, the most celebrated were those of Tezcucuo, Cholula, and Teotihuacan. The old historians speak with wonder of the number of temples in Cholula. Cortes wrote to the emperor Charles V. that from the top of one of them, he had counted more than four hundred towers of others. The lofty pyramid raised by the Toltecas remains to this day, but is so covered with earth and bushes that it has more the appearance of a natural eminence, than of an artificial structure.

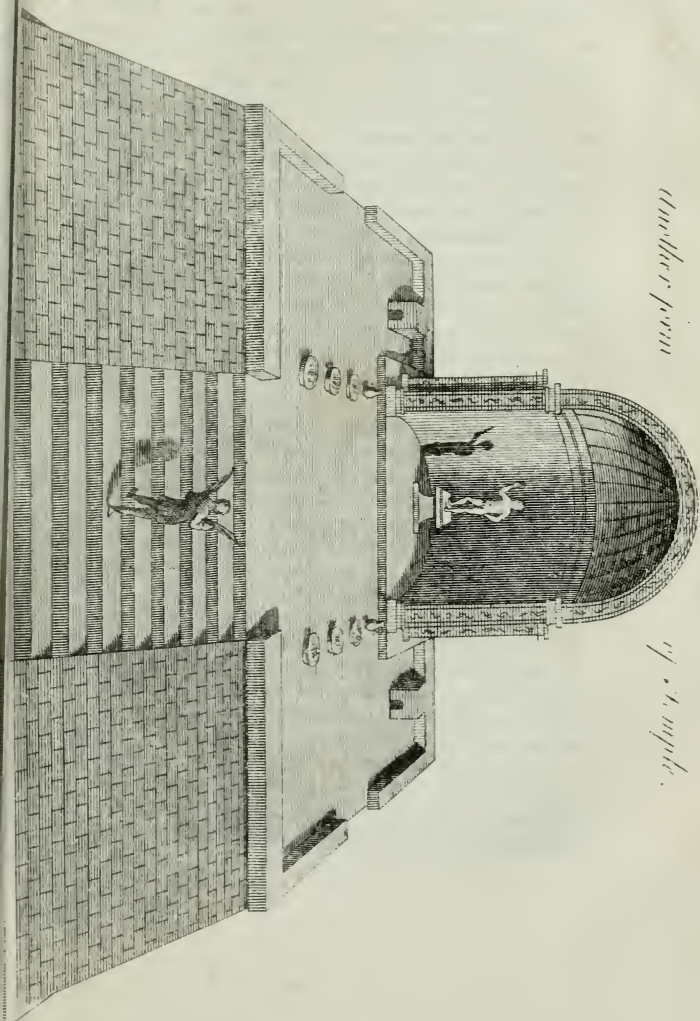
For the following notice of these, and other religious monuments of Mexico, we are indebted principally to the labours of M. de Humboldt.

XXIII. The group of pyramids of Teotihuacan, is in the Vale of Mexico, eight leagues N. E. from the capital, in a plain bearing the name of *Micoatl* or *path of the dead*. There are two large pyramids, one dedicated to the sun and the other to the moon; surrounded by several hundreds of smaller ones, which form right angled streets in the direction of the cardinal points. The greater pyramid is 181, and the lesser 144 feet in perpendicular height. The base of the first is 693 feet in length, and its height is greater than the Mycerinus, and the length of its base nearly equal to that of the Cephren, the least of the three great pyramids at Geeza, in Egypt, around which are three smaller ones, sym-

trian statue of Charles IV. executed by Don Manuel Tolso, at the expense of the viceroy, the marquis of Branciforte.—Humboldt's Researches, vol. 1. p. 49. English Trans.

*clothes room*

*of a temple.*







metrically placed parallel to the fronts of the greater. The small mounds of Teotihuacan, which are scarce 33 feet high, served according to the tradition of the natives, as burial places for their chiefs. The great pyramids had four principal stories, with flights of steps, the edges of which may yet be distinguished. The nucleus is of clay mixed with small stones, encased by a thick wall of Tezontli or porous amygdaloid, a construction similar to the pyramid of Sakharah in Africa. On the respective summits were colossal statues of stone, emblematical of the sun and moon, covered with gold, of which they were stripped by the soldiers of Cortes. When the bishop Zumarraga engaged in the destruction of the monuments of Mexican religion and history, he ordered the demolition of these idols. The remains of the staircases, of large hewn stone, which once led to the platforms of these *teocallis* are still visible.

XXIV. On the east of the plain of Teotihuacan, descending the Cordillera towards the gulph of Mexico, is the pyramid of Papantla, embosomed in the dense forest of Tajin, which was accidentally discovered, scarce sixty years since, by some Spanish hunters. This appears to have had seven stories. Its form is more tapering than any other monument of its kind, being nearly 60 feet in height, whilst its base is only 83 in breadth. It is built wholly of hewn stone of extraordinary size, regularly and beautifully shaped. Three staircases lead to the top, which with the walls are ornamented with hieroglyphic sculpture and small niches arranged with great symmetry. The latter correspond with the three hundred and eighteen simple and compound signs of the Mexican calendar.

The greatest, most ancient, and most celebrated of the monuments of Anahuac, is the pyramid of Cholula, called by the Spaniard *El monte hecho à*

*manos* or "*The mountain made by hands.*" From a distance it has the aspect of a natural hill covered with vegetation.

XXV. A vast plain, la Puebla, is separated from the valley of Mexico by the chain of volcanic mountains extending from Popocatepetl towards Rio Frio and the Peak of Telapón. This plain, fertile, though destitute of trees, is rich in memorials of Mexican history. Here were the capitals of Tlascala, Huexotzinco, and Cholula, which notwithstanding their continued dissensions, firmly and successfully resisted the power of the Aztec kings. To the east of the now small city of Cholula, which Cortes compared with the most populous of Spain, on the road to Puebla, lies the pyramid. It has four stories of equal height, making together 133 feet, and, like the other teocallis faces the cardinal points. The base is on each side 1563 feet in length. Torquemada computes the height at 257 feet, Betancourt at 217, and Clavigero at 204 feet. Bernal Diaz, who amused himself in counting the steps of the several temples, reports that there were 114 in the great Teocalli of Mexico, 117 in that of Tezcuco, and 120 in that of Cholula. The base of the last is twice as broad as that of the pyramid of Cheops in Egypt, but the height is little more than that of the Mycerinus. It would seem to have been designed to give to the monuments of Teotihuacan and Cholula, the same height, with different bases, the length of which should be in proportion of one to two. There is considerable difference in the proportion between the base and height of these various monuments. In the three great pyramids of Geeza, the heights are to the bases as 1 to 1.7; in that of Papantla, as 1 to 1.4; in the greater pyramid of Teotihuacan as 1 to 3.7; and in that of Cholula as 1 to 7.8. The last is built of unbaked brick, alternating with layers of clay. The Indians

of Cholula assert that the inside is hollow, and that during the abode of Cortes in this city, their ancestors had concealed a number of troops within it; but the materials of which the Teocalli is built, and the silence of historians, render this improbable.

It is certain, however, that in this as in other pyramids, there are cavities which served as sepulchres for the natives. This was discovered about thirty years ago, when in making a new road from Puebla to Mexico, the first story of the pyramid was cut through, and a chamber exposed, formed of stone and covered with cypress. The structure contained two skeletons, some idols in basalt, and many vases curiously painted and varnished. The arrangement of the bricks over this chamber, was such as to diminish their pressure upon it; large bricks were placed horizontally, so that the upper course should project beyond the lower, serving as a substitute for the Gothic vault. Similar vestiges have been found in Egyptian edifices. An adit dug through the teocalli of Cholula, would be an interesting operation, and we may be surprized that the desire to obtain hidden treasures, has not prompted the undertaking. In the interior of the famous Huaca de Toledo in the city of Chimu in Peru, the tomb of a Peruvian prince, Garcia Gutierrez discovered in digging a gallery in 1576, massive gold, of the value of a million of dollars.

The area of the platform of the pyramid of Cholula, is 14000 square feet; from it the eye ranges over a magnificent prospect; Popocatepetl, Iztaccihuatl, the Peak of Orizaba, and the Sierra of Tlascalla, famous for the tempests which gather round their summit. Thence may be seen at one view, three mountains higher than mount Blanc, two of which are active volcanos. A small chapel surrounded with cypress dedicated to the virgin *de los Remedios*, has succeeded the temple anciently as-

cribed to Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air. And a priest of the Indian race celebrates mass where his ancestors poured forth torrents of human blood.

In the time of Cortes, Cholula was deemed a holy city. No where existed a greater number of temples, of priests, and other ministers of the altar; no spot displayed greater magnificence in public worship or greater austerity in religious practices. Since the introduction of christianity among the Indians, the symbols of a new worship have not effaced the remembrance of the old. The people assemble in crowds from distant quarters on the summit of the pyramid, to celebrate the festival of the virgin. A mysterious dread, a religious awe falls upon them, at the sight of this great temple of their abandoned gods.

XXVI. There is great similarity of construction in the Mexican *teocallis*, and the temple of Belus, at Babylon. According to Herodotus,\* the latter had eight stories, was a stadium in height, and its base was equal to its elevation. The outer wall, surrounding it, was two stadia square. The pyramid was built of brick and asphaltum. A temple was erected on the summit, and another at the base. The first was without statues, containing only a table of gold and a bed, on which a female chosen by the god reposed. But Diodorus Siculus asserts,† that it contained an altar and three statues, to which he gave the names of Jupiter, Juno, and Rhea; but neither the statues nor temple existed in his time. In the temples of Mexico, as in that of Belus, the great mass of the fabric was distinguished from the superstructure. This distinction is noted in the letters of Cortes, and the history of Dias. No ancient writer mentions, that the temple of Belus was in accordance with the cardi-

\* Lib. 1. ch. 181. 183.

† Vol. 1. lib. 2. p. 123.



nal points, like the Egyptian and Mexican pyramids. Pliny observes,\* that Belus was considered the inventor of astronomy, and Diodorus relates, that the Babylonian temple served as an observatory to the Chaldeans. The Mexican priests, also, observed the stars from the summits of their teocalis, and announced to the people by the sound of the horn, the hours of the night. These mounds were built in the interval between the epoch of Mahomet, and the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella; and we cannot observe without astonishment, that American edifices, the form of which is almost the same as that of one of the most ancient monuments on the banks of the Euphrates, belong to times so near our own.

The pyramidal monuments of the old and new continents though alike in form, seem to have had different destinations. Those at Geeza and Sakhara, in Egypt; that of the Scythian queen Zarina, one stadia high, and three in circumference, surmounted by a colossal statue; the fourteen in Etruria said to have been enclosed in the labyrinth of the king Porsenna at Clusium; were sepulchres of the illustrious dead. Those of China and Thibet, have only a few feet of elevation. Further west, the dimensions increase. The Tumulus of Alyattes, the father of Cræsus in Lydia, was six stadia, and that of Ninus, ten stadia in diameter. In the north of Europe, the sepulchres of the Scandinavian king Gormus, and the queen Daneboda covered with mounds of earth, are 1000 feet broad, and more than 100 high. These tumuli are found in both hemispheres, in the United States and in Canada, as well as in Peru, where numerous galleries of stone, communicating by shafts, fill the interior of the *huacas*, or artificial hills. In Asia, these monuments were

\* Nat. Hist. lib. vi. 80.

decorated with the refinement of eastern luxury while the primitive form was preserved. The tombs of Pergamus, are cones of earth raised on circular walls, and seem to have been encased with marble.

The Mexican pyramids were at once temples and tombs. The essential part of a teocalli was the chapel at the top of the edifice. In the infancy of civilization, high places were selected by the people to offer their sacrifices to the gods. The first altars, and the first temples, were erected on mountains, and when they were isolated the worshippers delighted in the toil of shaping them into regular forms, and otherwise adapting them to religious purposes. What more sublime and impressive, than a sacrifice offered in the sight of an assembled nation?

The pyramid of Belus was also the temple, and the tomb of this god. In Arcadia, the tumulus containing the ashes of Calisto, bore on its top the temple of Diana. Pausanias\* describes it as a cone made by the hands of man, and long covered with vegetation. This is a very remarkable monument, in which the temple is only an incidental decoration, and may be deemed an intermediate step between the teocallis of Mexico, and the pyramids of Sakhara.†

XXVII. But, perhaps no monument of the Mexicans deserves more attention than that of Xochicalco, as well on account of its grandeur, as the art employed in its construction. On the S. E. of the city of Cuernuvaca, (the ancient Quauhnahuac,) on the western declivity of the Cordillera, in the happy region of the *tierra templada*, where reigns perpetual spring, rises an isolated hill 557

\* Lib. 8. c. 25.

† See Humboldt's Researches, Art. Pyramid of Cholula.

feet high. The Indians call it Xochichalco or the "house of flowers," but the etymology of the name is as uncertain, as the epoch in which the monument was constructed. The hill is a mass of rocks to which human industry has given a conical form. It is divided into five stories, each covered with masonry, and about 67 feet in perpendicular height, sloping to the S. W. for the better carrying off the rains, which fall here frequently. The hill is surrounded by a deep and broad ditch, and the whole entrenchment is nearly 13.333 feet in circumference. The summit of the hill is an oblong platform, 320 feet from E. to W. and 240 from N. to S. encircled by a wall of hewn stone 7 feet high which may have served as a defence for combatants. In the centre of this spacious enclosure are the remains of a pyramidal structure, which was originally five stories, in form like the teocallis we have already described. The first only has been preserved. The owners of a sugar house near the spot, like barbarians, demolished the building, to obtain bricks for their ovens. The Indians of Tetlamma assert, that the five stories existed in 1750. From the dimensions of the first story it is conjectured that the edifice was 67 feet high. Its faces front the cardinal points. The base is 70 feet in length by 57 in breadth. It is remarkable that no vestige of a staircase can be discovered leading to the top of the pyramid, where formerly, it is asserted, there was a stone seat, ornamented with hieroglyphics. All who have examined the work have been struck with the accurate form and high polish of the stones, all of which are parallopipedes, the care with which they have been arranged, without cement between the joints, and the execution of the reliefs with which they are decorated. Each sculptured figure covers several stones, and as the outline is uninterrupted, it would seem that they were

wrought after the building was erected. Among its ornaments, are heads of crocodiles spouting water, and figures of men sitting cross-legged, after the Asiatic custom.

The ditch with which the hill is surrounded, the covering of the terraces, the number of subterraneous apartments cut in the rock on the north side, and the wall defending the approach to the platform concur to give the monument a military aspect. The natives designate the ruins by a name equivalent to that of castle or citadel; and those of the neighbouring village of Tetlama possess a map drawn before the arrival of the Spaniards, but to which some names have been added since the conquest, in which, at the place where the monument is situate, is the representation of two warriors fighting with bludgeons, one of whom is called Xochicalco, and the other Xicatetl. From this circumstance it has been inferred that the monument derived its name from one of these combatants. Near Xochichalco, sixty years since, a stone was found on which was represented in relief, an eagle tearing a captive; an allusion, probably to a victory obtained by the Mexicans, over some neighbouring nation.\*†

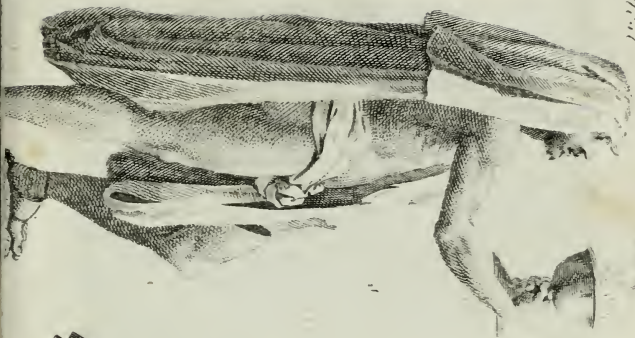
XXVIII. Ample revenues were assigned for the maintenance of this stupendous system of idolatory. Each temple had its lands, and serfs to cultivate them, under the direction of the priests. Beside which, the offerings of every kind, made by the superstitious worshippers, were enormously great. After providing for the priests, these stores were annually distributed to the poor.

\* Humboldt's Researches, Artic.monument of Xochichalco. *Descripcion de las antiquidades de Xochichalco*, par Don Joseph Antonia Alzate, and Ramirez. Mexico, 1791. *Due Antichi Monumenti di Architettura Messicana*, illustrati da Pietri Marquez. Rome 1804.

† See note A. Appendix.



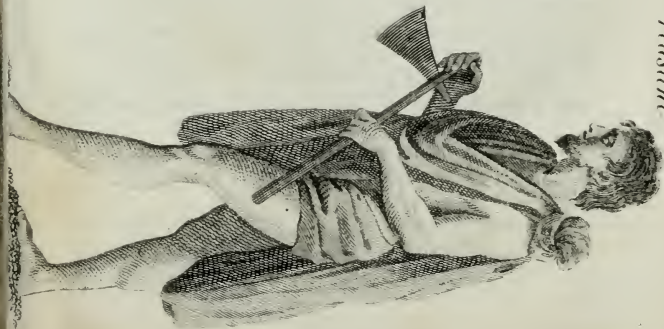
*Primal*



*Warrior*



*Peasant*







The numbers of priests necessarily corresponded with the multitude of the gods and the temples; nor was the homage they received much less than that offered to the divinities themselves. The area of the great temple of Mexico alone is said to have contained five thousand; and the number of the religious ministers throughout the empire, is supposed to have exceeded a million. The principal nobles vied with each other, in consecrating their children to the temporary service of the gods *within* the temples; whilst the inferior ones employed theirs in works *without*, in carrying wood, feeding the fires, and like offices; all deeming the honour of ministering to the gods the greatest to which they could aspire.

The priesthood was formed into a hierarchy, of which two high priests, bearing the names of *Tco-teuctli*, (divine lord,) and *Hueiteopixqui*, great priest, were the heads. This eminent dignity was conferred only, on men distinguished for their birth, probity, and profound knowledge of religious ceremonies. They were oracles consulted by the kings in all affairs, without whose approbation no war was ever undertaken. To them belonged the office of anointing the monarch, after his election; and of opening the breasts, and tearing out the hearts of the human victims, at the most solemn sacrifices. The high priest of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, was always the second son of the king. Among the Totonocas and Mexicans, he was anointed with elastic gum, mixed with children's blood, which was called the divine unction. And it would seem, that the integrity of the priesthood of each nation was preserved, notwithstanding the subjection of the state by the Mexican power.

The high priests were chosen by election, but in what manner is not correctly known. Those of Mexico were distinguished by a tuft of cotton

which hung from their breasts. At the principal festivals they dressed in splendid habits adorned with the symbols of the god, whom they on such occasions adored. The high priest of the Mixtecas at solemn feasts was clothed in a short coat, on which the principal events of their mythology were represented; above that a surplice, and over all a capuchin. On his head he wore a plume of green feathers, curiously interwoven with small figures of the gods. From his shoulder hung one tassal of cotton and another from his arm.

The high priests nominated a grand vicar called *Mexicoteohuatzin*, whose duty it was, to enforce the due observance of all rites and ceremonies; and to watch over the conduct of the priests who had charge of the seminaries. His chief badge of distinction was a small bag of gum copal, which he always carried about him. But as his jurisdiction was very extensive, he had two deputies; one *Huitznahuatcohuatzin* charged with whatever related to the rites; the other *Tepancohuatzin* who had the supervision of matters of discipline.

The *Tlatquimilolteuctli*, managed the economy of the sanctuaries; the *Ometochtli*, was the chief composer of the hymns sung at the festivals; the *Epcocuiltzin*, master of the ceremonies; the *Tlapixcatzin*, was leader of the choir, who appointed the music and superintended the choristers. Thus, a regular gradation was observed from the chief priests to the acolyte or ordinary assistant at the altar. To each, his proper office was assigned, and its duties were carefully enforced. One of the most important of the religious officers was the rector, appointed to each division of the capital, and other cities, and to the rural districts, who directed every act of religion in his particular cure, and was immediately subject to the high priest.

It was the duty of the priests charged with the

service of the temples to offer incense to the idols four times a day; at dawn, at the meridian, at sun set, and at midnight. To the sun, these offerings were yet more frequent, being made also four times during the night. The ordinary incense was copal or other aromatic gum; but on certain festivals *Chapopotli* or bitumen of Judea was used. The censers were commonly of clay, but sometimes of gold. Each priest on his turn of service, dyed his body with ink, made of the soot of a species of aromatic pine, over which he spread a coat of ochre or cinnabar; and every evening he bathed in ponds within the enclosure of the temple. From the latter circumstance, it may be inferred, that the turn of service commenced at midnight. The priests used a more extraordinary and abominable unction, when they offered sacrifices on the tops of the mountains or in the dark caverns of the earth. They beat in a mortar the ashes of many poisonous insects, such as scorpions, spiders, and worms, and even small serpents, with the soot of tobacco and other plants, and some live insects. They offered this mixture, in small vessels, to their gods, and afterwards rubbed it upon their bodies. When thus anointed, they became fearless of danger from reptiles or wild beasts. They called it *Teopatli* or divine medicament, and imagined it a specific for several disorders when spread upon the bodies of the sick.

The ordinary dress of the Mexican priests differed from that of the common people, only, in a black cotton mantle, which they wore like a veil over the head. But those who dwelt in monasteries and professed great austerity of life, were always clothed in black, like the common priests of other nations of the empire. They never shaved the head or beard, by which means their hair grew so long as to reach to their legs. It was twisted with thick cot-

ton cords, and bedaubed with ink, forming a weighty and disgusting mass.

The morals of the priests were generally austere. They were remarkable for their sobriety, and rarely tasted wine. They ordinarily dwelt together in communities, lived chastely, and abstemiously; and looseness of conduct, and neglect of duty, were severely punished; the former sometimes by death. Whilst employed in the temple they abstained from all women but their wives; affecting so much modesty and reserve, that when they met a female, they cast their eyes to the ground, that they might not see her. Incontinence was severely punished. The priest, who, at Teohuacan, was convicted of having violated his chastity, was delivered up to the people, and put to death at night by the bastinado. In Ichatlan, the high priest was required to live constantly within the temple, and to abstain from all sexual commerce, under the penalty of being torn to pieces, and his bloody limbs presented, as a warning, to his successor.\* They poured boiling water on the heads of those who from laziness, did not rise to the nocturnal duties of the temple, or bored their lips and ears; and if the delinquents were not corrected by these punishments, they were ducked in the lake, and underwent a temporary banishment from the sanctuary.

The office of priest was not in its nature perpetual. Whilst some dedicated their lives to the service of the altar, others engaged in it only for a certain time, in the fulfilment of some parental vow, or as a particular act of devotion. Nor was the office confined to the male sex. Women were employed in it, who offered incense to the idols,

\* Probably the evidence demanded on such occasions, was that of the Turkish law, as construed by the Caliph Omar; who required that the witnesses, four in number, should have all seen *stylum in pyxide*. See 6 Gib. Rom. Emp. 291.



tended the sacred fire, swept the area, and prepared and tendered the daily offerings of provisions; but they were excluded from the performance of the sacrifices, and the higher dignities of the priesthood. The priestess was sometimes devoted to the altar from her infancy; but commonly, her vocation was temporary, and induced by some vow in sickness, the desire to obtain a happy marriage, or temporal benefit to her family; and it usually endured one or two years. In the first case, as soon as the girl was born, the parents devoted her to some god, and informed the rector of their district of their purpose, who communicated it to the *Tepanteohuatzin* or superior general of the seminaries. At two months old she was carried to the temple, and a broom and small censer with incense, placed in her little hands, to indicate her destination. This ceremony was repeated monthly, until she attained her fifth year; when she was consigned to the superior general, who lodged her in the female seminary, where she was instructed in religion and the proper duties and employments of her sex. Those who entered the service on account of some vow, indicated their profession by cutting off the hair. All were required to live in the greatest purity of manners, silence, and retirement, without communication with the other sex. Their principal office was to maintain the sacred fire, and to offer incense to the idols; and for this purpose they were divided into classes, serving alternately, during the night and day. In the performance of this function, they necessarily assembled with the priests; but to prevent impropriety, the sexes officiated in separate wings, under the careful superintendence of their respective superiors. The time not employed in religious duties, was devoted to the fabrication of cloths, for the dress of the idols, and decoration of the sanctua-

ries. The chastity of these vestals was deemed sacred, and its violation was unpardonable. If a feeble priestess yielded to temptation, though her fault were undiscovered, she lived in perpetual dread of the vengeance of heaven, which she sought to avert by fasts and prayers.

When the maid attained the age of sixteen or eighteen years, the usual period of marriage, her parents having prepared a proper match, presented to the superior general, some quails, in plates curiously varnished, gum copal, flowers, and provisions, accompanied by a studied address, in which they thanked him for his care and attention in the education of their daughter, and demanded his permission to settle her in marriage; this request was granted always, and the tutor exhorted his pupil to perseverance in virtue, and to pay due regard to the duties of the married state.

Beside the general classes of the priesthood, which we have described, there were special orders or communities of men and women, with peculiar rites and institutes, devoted to the exclusive worship of certain deities. One of these was that of *Quetzalcoatl*. The life led by the members of this order, in their colleges or monasteries of either sex was rigid and austere. They dressed with great decency, bathed regularly at midnight, and watched until two hours before day, chaunting the praises of their god. Such was the confidence placed in their virtue, that they were allowed the singular privilege of visiting the mountains at all hours, to perform the cruel service of draining their veins, in honour of their deity. The superiors of the order, bore the name of their god, and were of such high dignity, that they visited none but the king. The members were devoted to it from their infancy. On the birth of a child so destined, the parents invited the superior to an entertainment, who usually

deputed one of his company. The deputy carried the child to him, who offered it with a prayer to *Quetzalcoatl*, and put a collar about his neck to be worn until he was seven years old. When the infant had completed his second year, the superior further marked his destination by a small incision on the breast, and in his seventh year he entered the monastery. This order was called *Tlamacazcajtli*, and its members *Tlamacazque*.

Another order consecrated to *Tezcatlipoca*, was called *Telpochtliztli* or *The Youths*, consisting also of persons destined to it from infancy, who were received with ceremonies similar to those above described; but they did not live together, each individual residing at his own house. In every district of the city, they had a superior, who governed them, and a house, where both sexes assembled under his superintendence, at sun set, to dance, and sing the praises of their god.

Among the *Totonacas*, was an order of monks, devoted to the goddess *Centeotl*. Their unimpeachable life was spent in great retirement and ascetic devotion. The community was composed of men above sixty years of age, widowers, estranged from all commerce with women, and of exemplary manners. Their number was fixed, and when diminished by death, was filled up by election. They were esteemed and consulted by all classes of people, whose applications they received, sitting upon their heels with eyes fixed on the ground; and their answers were accepted as oracles even by kings. Their chief employment was painting historical pictures, which they delivered to the high priest to be exhibited to the people.

XXIX. In treating of the religious customs, we must not forbear to notice the austerities universally practised, as well by the priests, as by the people.

Their fasts and vigils, by which they prepared themselves, for the festivals were many, and endured one or more days, according to their ritual. Their fasts consisted in abstinence from flesh and wine, and in eating but one meal a day, at such hour as convenience or fancy directed. They were commonly attended by vigils, during which, a great part of the night was spent in prayer, or in offering incense to the gods. In these seasons, sexual commerce was forbidden even with their wives. And to these austerities, the more cruel one was often added, of cutting and lacerating their flesh, and sprinkling the ground with their blood.

Of these fasts some were general, and extended even to children. Such was that which preceded the festival of *Mixcoatl*, and continued five days; that of four days anterior to the feast of *Tezcatlipoca*, and that which introduced the entertainment given in honour of the sun every two hundred and sixty days. During the last, the king retired into a certain chamber of the temple, where he watched, and shed his blood according to the custom of the nation.

Other fasts were obligatory on individuals only; such as that of one or more days, which preceded the sacrifice of prisoners, by those who offered them. The nobles, as well as the king, had houses within the precincts of the temple, to which they occasionally retired to do penance. And on one festival, all incumbents of office, after their daily duties, withdrew thither for the same purpose.

The effusion of blood, was frequent and daily with some of the priests. The practice had the name of *Tlamacazqui*; and in cruelty, it is scarce surpassed by that of the Fakirs of the East. They pierced the lip, tongue, arms, and legs, and other parts of their bodies, with the spines of the metl, and passed through the holes pieces of

cane, the size of which they increased, with each renewal of penance. The blood which flowed from their wounds was carefully collected in leaves of the *Acxojatl*, and the sanguine spines, wrapt in small balls of hay, were exposed on the walls of the temple, as testimonials of the penance they performed for the people. The devotees of this kind, who dwelt in the great temple of Mexico, bathed in a pond; which, from being always tinged with their blood, was called *Ezapan*.

One sect of these *Tlamacazqui*, who served in the principal temple of Teohuacan, were particularly remarkable for the severity of their penance. A class of four, constantly resided in the sanctuary. Their dress was of the vilest kind; their daily diet, a loaf of maize, of two ounces weight, and a cup of *atolli* or gruel made of the same grain. Two of them alternately watched during the night, which was spent in singing, burning incense, and shedding their blood upon the pavement. Their rigid fast was relieved only on festival days, when free indulgence was given to their appetites; but they prepared for these occasions, by the severe inflictions already described, having often sixty pieces of cane passed through their flesh at once. This life they endured for four years, when their places were supplied by others; and if one happened to die, a substitution was immediately made, so that their number was never incomplete. These priests were universally held in great veneration. But wo unto him, who broke his vow of chastity,—for on conviction, after due proof, he was beaten to death, his body burned, and his ashes given to the winds.

The fast observed by the Tlascalans, every divine year, preparatory to the festival of the god *Camaxtl*, the same with *Huitzilopochtli*, was also extraordinary. On this occasion, the *Archcauhtli*,



assembled the *Tlamacazquis*, and seriously exhorted them to penance ; warning them, that if any deemed himself incompetent to perform it he should so declare; for, that if after commencing it, he either renounced or failed in the attempt, he would be deemed unworthy of the company of the gods, would be expelled from the priesthood, and deprived of his estate. Those who assumed the fast, generally about two hundred, ascended, with the chief, the mountain *Matlalcueje*, upon whose summit was a sanctuary dedicated to the goddess of water. The *Archcauhtli*, mounted to the top to make an oblation of gems, precious feathers and copal, whilst the rest waited in the middle of the ascent, beseeching the goddess to support them through their cruel penance. Upon their return, they procured a number of small knives of *itzli*, and a quantity of small rods of various thickness, made by artists whose labours were preceded by a fast of five days; if any of these implements happened to break, the workman was held to have been unmindful of his fast. The *Tlamacazqui*, now commenced their penance, which lasted not less than one hundred and sixty days. On the first, they perforated their tongues, through which they drew the small rods, and every twentieth day this cruel operation was repeated. Notwithstanding the pain and loss of blood which it produced, the penitents were required to sing continually, and aloud, the praises of the gods. After the expiration of eighty days, a general fast commenced, from which, none, not even the heads of the republic, were exempted, and which continued for an equally long time. During this period no person was permitted to bathe, nor to eat pepper, the common seasoning of their dishes.

Upon occasions of great public calamity, the high priest of Mexico observed a fast yet more

dreadful. For this purpose, he retired to a wood, where he constructed a hut for himself, covered with branches, constantly renewed as their verdure faded. Here entombed, he spent nine or ten months occluded from all human society; with no other food, than raw maize and water; in continual prayer and frequent effusion of blood. This fast was not exacted, but was purely voluntary; few observed it, and he who performed it once, never attempted it a second time.

In Mixteca, where there were many monasteries, the first born sons of the nobles, before entering upon the estates of their deceased fathers, underwent a rigorous penance during a whole year. The heir was conducted by a numerous attendance to a monastery, where he was stripped of his garments, clothed in rags, daubed with *olli* or elastic gum, his face, belly, and back, rubbed with fetid herbs, and a small lance of *itzli* delivered to him, that he might draw his own blood. He was restricted to a very abstemious diet, subjected to the hardest labours, and punished severely for any failure of duty. At the end of the year he was bathed in perfumed water, by four priests, and reconducted to his home with pomp and music.

If the mythology of the Mexicans was preferable to that of the ancient pagan world, in the dignity of its gods, and its freedom from licentiousness, it was certainly more insensate and less attractive in its gloomy superstition and severity of discipline; and was most execrable by its horrible sacrifices of innumerable human victims. In vain have historians endeavoured to palliate their enormity by proving that like customs prevailed among various nations of the eastern hemisphere. There may be a parallel in history for the deliberate, systematic, and disgusting slaughter of human beings committed by the Mexicans; but we think there is none

for the frequency of the sacrifice, and the number of the victims.

We are ignorant of the nature of the sacrifices offered by the Toltecas to the deity, in that splendid temple erected to his honour, whose extensive ruins yet remain. It most probably partook of the simplicity and purity of their own character. The Chechemecas and the Acolhuacas, before the arrival of the Aztecas, had neither temples, nor idols, nor priests; and made no other offering to their gods, the sun and moon, than herbs, flowers, fruits and incense. If the simplicity of their worship be ascribed to their ignorance and want of cultivation, it has the recommendation of innocence and moral beauty. What offering more appropriate to the great Creator, than the evidences of his munificent goodness? The Mexicans were the sole authors of the barbarous sacrifices, the probable origin of which we have already narrated.\* These sacrifices were doubtless rare in the commencement of their power, but they multiplied with their victories, and extended with their dominion; and they form an extraordinary anomaly, of a people remarkable in many respects for wisdom, justice, and liberality, founding and propagating a superstition, wholly at war with the first passion of our nature, the preservation of existence.

These sacrifices varied with respect to number, place, and manner, according to the nature of the festival. In general, the victims were slain by cutting open the breast. But some were drowned, some starved in the mountain caverns, and others fell more honourably in the gladiatorial combat. The customary place was the upper area of the temple, in which stood the altar for ordinary sacrifice. The altar of the greater temple of Mexico,

\* See pages 109, 112 *supra*.

was a green stone, (probably jasper,) convex above; about three feet high, as many broad, and more than five feet long. Six priests usually ministered; whose chief the *Topiltzin*, held pre-eminent and hereditary dignity, and at every sacrifice assumed the name of the god, to whom it was made. For the performance of this function, he was clothed in a red habit fringed with cotton; on his head he wore a crown of green and yellow feathers; his ears were decorated with pendants of gold and emeralds, and from his nether lip, hung a jewel of turquoise. His assistants were dressed in white habits embroidered with black, their hair was bound about their heads with leather strings; their foreheads covered with small shields of paper variously painted; and their bodies stained all over black.

The destined victim, stripped of all covering, was borne by these ministers to the area, and extended upon the altar, whose convex form arching the breast and abdomen, rendered motion almost impossible under their pressure upon his limbs. After indicating to the people, the deity to whom the offering was about to be made, that they might duly worship, the chief priest with a keen knife of *itzli*, dexterously opened the breast and tore forth the heart, which, while yet palpitating he offered to the sun, and then cast at the foot of the idol; taking it up again, he presented it to the idol itself, and subsequently burned it, preserving the ashes with great care. If the idol were gigantic and hollow, the heart was introduced into his mouth with a golden spoon. In all cases, the lips of the deity, and the door posts of the sanctuary were smeared with the victim's blood. If the victim were a prisoner of war, the head was severed to be preserved as a trophy; but if he were a slave, purchased for sacrifice, this was not done. The carcase was cast into the lower area, in the first case, where

it was seized by his captor, and in the second, was carried from the altar by its owner, and served up as a feast for himself and friends. The legs, thighs, and arms only were eaten, the refuse was burned, or given to the beasts and birds of prey in the royal menageries. The Otomies tore the body in pieces and sold it in the market. The Zapotecas sacrificed men to their gods, women to their goddesses, and children to their penates.

The force of our imitative propensity was never more strikingly displayed, than in the adoption of these detestable rites, not only by the nations conquered by the Mexicans, but also by their allies, and by people, not immediately subject to their power.

But the number of the sacrifices among the neighbouring nations was less, and occasionally varied in their form. The Tlascalans, at one of their festivals, tied a prisoner to a high cross, and shot him to death with arrows; at another, to a low cross and killed him by the bastinado. The Quauh-titlans, at their festival, held every fourth year in honour of the god of fire, sacrificed two slaves, flayed them and took out the bones of their thighs. On the following day, two of the principal priests, clad in the bloody skins, with the femoral bones, descended from the top of the temple with solemn steps, and dismal howlings, whilst the people, assembled in crowds below, shouted, "Behold our gods." On reaching the court the priests commenced a religious dance, which lasted the greater part of the day. In the mean time, the multitude sacrificed a quantity of quails, never less than eight thousand. When these ceremonies were over, the priests tied six prisoners on the tops of as many lofty trees, planted for the purpose, who were instantly destroyed by innumerable arrows. The victims were then dropped to the ground, their



bosoms opened, and their hearts offered in the customary manner. Their bodies, and those of the quails, were shared by the priests and nobles, for the banquets which closed the festival.

The Mexicans too, occasionally varied their forms of human sacrifice. At times the victims were clothed in the vestments and badges of the god to whom they were offered, and attended by a guard went round the city soliciting alms for his temple. If the officer of the guard suffered one to escape, his negligence was punished by substituting him for the refugee. It was not unusual to feed and fatten the victims, that they might be more grateful at the table. At the festival of *Teteoinan*, the woman, who represented the goddess, was beheaded on the shoulders of another female. At one of the festivals of *Tlaloc*, two children of both sexes were sacrificed, by drowning in the lake; at another, three boys of six or seven years of age, were enclosed in a cavern, and left to die of fright and hunger. At the festival of the *arrival of the gods*, the victims were immolated by fire.

But the most celebrated sacrifice among the Mexicans, and which accorded well with their military genius was that, the Spaniards have properly, termed the *gladiatorial*. This, if not the most humane, was certainly the most honourable death, and was granted only to prisoners distinguished for their valour. Near to the greater temple of the larger cities, in an open space of ground, sufficient to contain a vast portion of the populace, was a round terrace, eight feet high, on which was placed a high circular stone, three feet thick, highly polished and richly ornamented with sculpture. On this, called the *Temalacatl*, the prisoner, armed with a shield and short sword, was tied by one foot. A Mexican warrior, better armed, and having the advantage of

unshackled limbs, was selected to encounter him. It was a *combat à outrance*, and the efforts of the parties corresponded with the imminence of the danger. If the prisoner fell, he was seized by the priests, dead or alive, and borne to the altar, where his heart was extracted, and offered to the gods in the common form; whilst the victor received the applause of the assembly, and some military honour from the king. But, if the prisoner overcame six successive antagonists, he was granted his life and his liberty, and suffered to return to his native country radiant with glory. Cortes relates, that a prince of Cholula slew in this trial, seven combatants, and that the Huexotzincos, whose prisoner he was, in dread of his prowess, faithlessly put him to death; by which act they became infamous among all the nations of Anahuac.

If the sacrifice of human victims in religious worship was rare among the learned and civilized Romans, those offered to their pleasures in the gladiatorial exhibitions at their theatres were frequent, and probably more numerous than the military sacrifices of the Mexicans. Several hundred, perhaps, several thousand victims, were annually slaughtered in the great cities of the Roman empire, even after the prohibitory decree of Honorius.

Historians differ widely on the number of human victims annually sacrificed in Anahuac. Zumaraga, the first bishop of Mexico, says, that the capital alone, supplied twenty thousand. Gomara affirms the whole to have equalled fifty thousand. Acosta reports, that one day, five thousand and on another, twenty thousand, were annually slain. Some authors maintain, that on the mountain *Tepayacac*, alone, twenty thousand were immolated to the goddess Tonantzin; and Torquemada asserts,

that there were not less than twenty thousand infants annually butchered; while Las Casas would reduce the whole number to less than one hundred. Clavigero conceives that all the authors have erred, Las Casas by diminution, and the others by exaggeration, of the number, which he, by no means disposed to darken the picture, admits, may amount to twenty thousand yearly, throughout the whole empire. But the number was not limited. It depended upon the quantity of prisoners, and the occasion of the sacrifice; as in the case of the consecration of the great temple of Mexico, when above sixty thousand were slaughtered in four days. The sacrifices multiplied in the divine years, and still more in the secular ones.

But the Mexicans, as we have seen in the course of our work, did not confine their sacrifices to human victims; but offered to their gods, other animals, and vegetables, and minerals. They saluted the sun daily, at his rising, with music and the offering of quails. They presented quails and falcons to Huitzilopochtli; hares, rabbits, deer, and coyots, to Mixcoatl; various plants, flowers, jewels, gums, and dressed provisions, to these and other gods. Every morning the altars were surrounded with vessels of boiling food, whose steams were held grateful and nutritious to the divinities. The most ordinary oblation was copal. No house was without censers; and all persons daily burned incense to their idols. The priests in their temples, the fathers of families in their houses, and judges in their tribunals upon the rendition of judgment, offered incense to the four principal winds. But incense offering was also an act of civil courtesy, and was especially used towards men of rank and ambassadors.

What remains to be said in relation to these strange and inhuman superstitions, but that they

were perversions of that piety, which leads all people to honour the divinity; and that though other nations were guilty of like deviations from reason and humanity, the Mexicans, had in most respects exceeded them. If in Egypt, thousands of human victims were annually offered to the gods, in Mexico, the sacrifice was tens of thousands. If the Greeks ate various portions of the human body as medicines; if the ancient inhabitants of Africa, Italy, Sicily, Scythia, and Judea, feasted on their fellow beings occasionally, the Mexicans indulged more frequently in the horrid repast. But whilst we speak of these superstitions and propensities with the detestation they merit, may we not ask, whether a period will not arrive, when our sacrifice of human victims, not to divine, but to human justice, will be almost as much the subject of wonder and abhorrence to our posterity, as are now, the Mexican rites to us? I speak of the civilized countries of the world. And let it be remembered, that in the seven years, preceding that in which I now write, from (1824 to 1830, inclusive,) in England and Wales, a portion only of the petty island of Great Britain, there were more than eight thousand, seven hundred and eighty-one persons sentenced to death; all, except three hundred and three for depredation on property; of whom, four hundred and seven were actually executed.\*

Let us, however, not quit this subject without offering for the Mexicans, the defence which they made for themselves; since a like justification is yet tendered for slavery, an enormity, second only

\* Report to the House of Lords, 1831. The prisoners for trial at the special assizes of December, of the home circuit, and under the special commission are not included in the report. What can more strongly and more fully show the folly and futility of the laws, than the fact, that out of 8.781 convicted, public opinion rescued 8.374 from the gallows.?

to that of the sacrifices of Mexico. "We have a right," said Montezuma, in reply to the reproaches of Cortes, "we have a right to take away the lives of our enemies; we could kill them in the heat of the battle as you do your enemies. What injustice is there, then; in making them, who are condemned to death, die in honour of our god." But we must also remark, that this apology did not cover the whole of the case. Since the Mexicans sacrificed, not only prisoners of war, but purchased slaves, children, persons sentenced to death for their crimes, and the wives of nobles, that they might accompany their husbands to the other world.

XXX. In order more fully to understand the nature of the Mexican religion, and the extravagance of its superstition, it will be proper to advert to the division and measurement of time adopted by the nations of Anahuac. The knowledge we possess upon this subject, has been carefully collected by the missionaries Motolinia and Sahagun, the learned Mexican, D. Carlo Seguenza, and critically and carefully examined by Clavigero.

These people divided the past, into four great epochs or ages. The first, *Atonatiuh*, the sun or age of water, commenced with the creation of the world, and ended with a general inundation, in which almost the whole human race, together with that luminary perished. The second, succeeded the flood, and is called *Tlaltonatiuh*, the age of earth. It is remarkable for having produced a race of giants, who, with the second sun, were destroyed by earthquakes. The third, *Ehècatonatiuh*, the age of air, endured until all mankind, with a third sun, were swept away by whirlwinds. The fourth, *Tletonatiuh*, the age of fire, began at the last restoration of the human race, and was destined to continue until the fourth sun and the



earth should be destroyed by fire, which they supposed would be at the end of one of their cycles. To this opinion, are ascribed the noisy festivals celebrated in honour of the god of fire, at the commencement of a cycle, in gratitude for his having deferred the destruction of the world.

In the computation of time, the polished nations of Anahuac, divided it into months, epochs, cycles, and centuries. The epoch consisted of thirteen years; four epochs formed a cycle, called *Toxiuhmolphilli* or the tying of the years, and two cycles a century, termed *Huehuetiliztli*, or old age.\* The years had four names; *Tochtli*, rabbit; *Acatl*, cane or reed; *Tecpatl*, flint; and *Calli*, house; these were distinguished by numerals, so that the years of the epocha were never confounded. Thus the first year of the cycle was 1. or *Ce*, *Tochtli*; the second, 2. or *Ome*, *Acatl*; the third, 3. or *Yei*, *Tecpatl*; the fourth, 4. or *Nahui*, *Calli*; the fifth, 5. or *Macuilli*, *Tochtli*; and so on to the thirteenth year, which was 13. or *Matlactli*, *Ome*, *Tochtli*; and terminated the first epoch. They began the second epoch with 1. or *Ce*, *Acatl*; then, 2. or *Ome*, *Tecpatl*; 3. or *Yei*, *Calli*; 4. or *Nahui*, *Tochtli*; and it was completed by 13. or *Matlactli* *Ome*, *Acatl*. The third epoch began with 1. *Ce*, *Tecpatl*, and finished with 13. or *Matlactli* *Ome*, *Tecpatl*. And the fourth epoch commenced with 1. or *Ce*, *Calli*, and ended with 13. or *Matlactli* *Ome*, *Calli*, forming the full cycle of fifty-two years.

Their solar year, like ours, consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days. For, though it was

\* The translator of Clavigero, has employed the terms *period*, *century*, and *age*. As the portion of time called by him a century, included fifty-two years only, the term is obviously improper; as the *period* really formed an epoch upon which their chronology depended, I have used that word. The term century, I have applied to the double cycle, or period of one hundred and four years.





L. 10. 10.

composed of eighteen months, of twenty days each, which make only three hundred and sixty, five days were added, after the last month, which were called *Nemontemi*, void or useless; because, on these days the inhabitants did nothing but receive and return visits. The year 1. *Tochtli*, the first of the cycle, began on the 26th of February; but every four years, the cycle anticipated one day, as in our bissextile or leap year; whence, in the last epoch of the cycle, the years began on the 14th day of February, on account of the thirteen days which intervene in the course of fifty-two years. But at the expiration of the cycle, the commencement of the year returned to the 26th of February.\*

Every month, and every day of the month, had its name. But the order of these varied, not only among the several nations, but also among the Mexicans themselves. In their ordinary mode of reckoning time, all agreed to pay no regard to the division of months or years, but to adopt periods of thirteen days, which ran on without interruption, from the end of a month or year. Twenty of these periods, made in thirteen months, a cycle of two hundred and sixty days, during which, the same

\* There is much confusion among the Mexican historians, in the denomination and series of the Mexican months, and as to the time when the year commenced. Mr. Gama, and after him, M. de Humboldt, asserts, that the first month was *Tititl*, and that it commenced on the 9th, and ended on the 28th of January. Clavigero admitting the uncertainty which prevails as to the name of the first, adopts *Atacahualco*, which in Gama's exposition is the third. But Clavigero, adheres to the time of the beginning of the year. Mr. Gama may be correct, as he had the aid of the almanac, cut on stone, disinterred from the great square of Mexico in 1790, which was unknown to Clavigero. But as the system given by the latter, has the most names, if not the greatest authority to support it, I have given it in the text.

sign or character, was not repeated with the same number. On the first day of the fourteenth month, another cycle commenced in the same order of the characters, and of the same number of periods as the first. If the year had not, besides the eighteen months, the five days called the *Nemontemi*, or if the periods had not been continued in these days, the first day of the second year, of the cycle of fifty-two years, would have been the same with that of the preceding; but as the period of thirteen days was continued through the *Nemontemi*, the signs changed place.\*

This was the religious computation of time; the civil varied only in having the month divided into four periods, each of five days, which might, without impropriety, be called the Mexican week. On a fixed day of each of these periods, the fair, or great market was held. The names *Tonalpohualli* and *Cempohualilhuatl*, which distinguished the civil from the ritual calendar, sufficiently indicated its character. The first signifies the *reckoning of the sun*, in opposition to the ritual calendar, called *Metzlapohualli*, or *reckoning of the moon*. The second is derived from *Cempohualli* twenty, and *Ilhuatl* festival, and alludes either to the twenty days of the month, or to the twenty solemn festivals of the civil year.†

This system for the distribution of time, though somewhat intricate, was accurately digested, and proves, that its framers possessed no ordinary degree of intellectual improvement. We celebrate the intercalation of a day in every four years, made by the astronomers of Julius Cæsar; the Mexicans, also, had sufficient science to discover, and to correct the excess of a few hours, in the solar, over

\* For a more minute exposition of this subject, see Clavigero, lib. vi.

† 1 Humboldt's Researches, p. 281.



the civil year, but they employed a different method, interposing thirteen days, every fifty-two years, which produce the same result. Hence, each cycle, commenced with the year 1 *Tochtli*, and the day 1. *Cipactli*.

The termination of the cycle, was a period deeply interesting to the people of Anahuac, as they were taught to believe the world would end with it. At that period they destroyed all their culinary utensils, and on the last night, performed the ceremony of kindling the new fire. When assured by its combustion that a new cycle was granted to them, they employed the thirteen following days, which were the intercallary ones, and pertained neither to the preceding nor succeeding cycle, in supplying the broken vessels, renewing their garments, repairing their houses and temples, and in preparations for the grand festivals of the new cycle.

The Mexicans accommodated their astronomical months, to the lunar periods, which they well understood, by a method we shall hereafter explain. And as to almost all other nations, the revolutions of the moon, which they termed *Metzli*, gave name to their months. This astronomical month was also divided into two parts, called the *vigil*, and the *slumber* of the moon. They distinguished their cycles by the small circles or numeral dots, in the same manner as they did their years, placing one or more such dots before them, as the occasion required.

The distribution of the signs, or characters of the days, months, and years, served the Mexicans as means of prognosticating human events, and of erecting a science similar to the vain judicial astrology of the elder continent, by which they predicted the good or evil fortune of infants, from the sign at their birth, and also the fate of all other events. Under this superstition the merchant deemed some

day under the sign of *Coatl*, (serpent,) propitious to commercial adventure; and persons born under the sign of *Quauhtli*, (eagle,) if males, were held mockers and slanderers, if females, loquacious and impudent. The concurrence of the year with the day of the rabbit, was esteemed the most fortunate season.

Having indicated the elements, it remains for us to speak of the manner in which this people represented the cycle, the year, and the month.

The cycle was represented by a circle, divided into fifty-two figures; or rather, by four figures, thirteen times varied, called *Toxiuhmolpilli*, or union of the years. About the periphery was twined, with admirable taste, a serpent, with four knots, pointing respectively to the cardinal points of the heavens, and having regard to the four epocha. These epocha were termed *Tlalpilli*. We certainly can discover no natural relation between this reptile and the sun; and yet nations of the old and new world, unconnected with each other, have adopted it as a symbol of time. In the centre of this circle appeared the sun, with a full human visage. The four figures are the rabbit, the reed, the flint, in form of a lance head, and the tower, representing a house. The years of the cycle, are numbered by commencing at the upper knot of the serpent, and descending towards the left. The first figure with one point, denotes, I. rabbit; the second, with two points, II. reed; the third, with three points, III. flint; and the fourth, with four points, IV. house; the fifth, with five points, V. rabbit. Thus continuing to the knot on the left, at which the second period begins, with the figure of the reed, and terminates at the lower knot, where commences the third epoch proceeding to the right, and finally, further on, the fourth.

The Mexican year, as we have already observed



*Mexican*

*Year*



consisted of eighteen months, which were also represented in a circle called *Xiuhlapohualli*, or diagram of the year. The emblem of the first, is the figure of water spread upon a house, whose name *Acahualco* or *Ailacahualco*, signifies the ceasing of water; because in that month, commencing on the 26th of February, and running into March, the rains ceased in the northern countries where the Toltecan calendar originated. It was called also, *Quauhuitlehua*, or the budding of trees, which happens at this time in the hotter countries. The Tlascalans called this month *Xilomaniliztli*, or the oblation of maize, which was then made, to obtain a productive harvest from the seed about to be sowed.

The second month was called *Tlacaxipehualitzli*, denoted by a figure resembling a pavilion, but which Clavigero believes to be a badly designed human skin; (with which the name corresponds,) because at this season human victims were flayed at the festival of Xipe, the god of the goldsmiths. But *Campagnoni* observes, that as the calendar was derived from the Toltecas, who never were guilty of these abominable sacrifices, we should hold the sign for a pavilion, which was particularly appropriate to the genial season; and was probably made of the hides of animals. The Tlascalans called this month *Coailhuatl*, or general festival, and represented it by the figure of a serpent entwined about a fan and an *Ajacaxtli*, the two latter denoting the dances then performed, and the former their universality.

The sign of the third month, according to Clavigero and Boturini, is a bird on a lancet, signifying the sprinkling of blood, more generally made in the nights of this month. The name of the month is *Tezoztontli*; "but we know, says Clavigero, neither its signification, nor the species of the bird repre-



sented." "The latter," says Campagnoni, "was probably a bird of passage, which appeared at this season." But Gama says, that Tezoztontli, is the abbreviation of Tezoziztli, with the diminutive *tontli* added, and that it is derived from the verb *Tozoa*, to watch, and means the month of the minor vigils, in contradiction to the succeeding, in which the king and nobles kept their vigils; and that the sign of the bird is misplaced, and properly belongs to the fourteenth month.

The fourth month, called *Hueitozoztli*, is indicated by the figure of a small building, upon which appear some leaves of rushes, typical of the ceremony performed this month, of putting rushes, sword grass, and other herbs, bathed in blood, which the people shed in honour of their gods, over the doors of their houses.

The head of a man with a necklace, represents the fifth month. The necklace was formed of wreaths of roasted maize, which the natives wore around their necks, and with which, they also adorned the idol of Tezcatlipoca; whence the month took the name of *Toxcatl*.

The sixth month was named *Etzalqualiztli*, from an earthen pot called Etzalli, in which was ordinarily prepared the gruel commonly used in this season.

The figures of the seventh and eighth months are typical of the lesser and greater festive dances, which were celebrated in them. The size of the figures corresponds with the character of the feasts of the respective months. The lances, near the figures, indicate the austerities which preceded the festivals. The Tlascalans represented the months by the heads of two nobles; the smaller festival or *Tecuilhuitontli*, by the head of a young man, and the greater, *Hueitecuilhuitl*, by that of an old one.

The ninth month was called *Miccailhuil*, (the

festival of the dead;) and the tenth *Hueimiccailhuil*, (the great festival of the dead.) The size of the mourning caps is in accordance with the names of the months. The Tlascalans painted for these months, skulls with bones, but the skull for the tenth was the larger.

The eleventh month is represented by a broom, employed in sweeping the temple; an act of religion, performed in this month by all persons, from which the name, *Ochpaniztli*, was derived.

The figure of the twelfth and thirteenth months is that of a parasite plant, which the Mexicans called *pachtli*. From it, the twelfth had its name; and as in the succeeding month, the plant was full grown, that, was called *Thueipachtli*. But the Mexicans more commonly employed the names, *Teotleco* and *Tepeilhuitl*, for these months respectively.

The figure of the fourteenth month, is the head of a bird. The Tlascalans distinguished it by the flamingo, called by the Mexicans *Quecholli*; and they gave this name to the month, because at this time, these birds resorted to the Mexican lakes.

The fifteenth month was indicated by a standard, representing that borne in the procession of Huitzilopochtli at this season. Its name, *Panquetzalitzli*, means the mounting of the standard.

The type of the sixteenth month, was water descending a stair; expressed by the name *Atemoztli*, given to it, either because this is the season of rain, or because at this time, the festival of the gods of the mountains, and of water was holden, to implore the necessary showers.

The seventeenth month is represented by a hand binding three pieces of wood together with a cord, denoting the constriction occasioned by the cold of the season; and such is the meaning of the name,

*Tititl.* The Tlascalans painted two sticks cased, and firmly fixed in a plank.

The eighteenth month is designated by the head of a quadruped upon an altar, emblematical of the sacrifice of animals during this month to the god of fire. The Mexicans represented it, by a man holding up a child by the head, and this accords with the interpretation given by some authors to the name *Izcalli*, which they say, means resurrection from the dead, or a new creation.

The moon within the circle of the year is copied from a Mexican painting, by which it seems the Indians well knew, that the luminary received her light from the sun. In some representations of the year, after the symbol of the eighteenth month, there were placed five large points, indicative of the five days called *Nemontemi*.

The day of the Aztecks, like that of the Persians, Egyptians, Babylonians, and the greater part of the nations of Asia, began at sunrising. It was divided into eight intervals, after the manner of the Hindoos, and the Romans; four of which, were determined by the rising, the setting, and the two passages of the sun across the meridian. Its hieroglyphic was a circle distributed into four parts. Although under the parallel of the city of Mexico, the length of the day does not vary more than two hours and twenty-one minutes, it is certain that the Mexican hours were originally unequal, like those of the planetary hours of the Jews, and those which the Greek astronomers noted under the name of *temporary*, in opposition to the equinoctial hours.

The portions of the day and night, which intervened between the above divisions, corresponded nearly to our hours, 3. 9. 15. and 21. astronomical time. To denote them, the Mexican pointed to the place in the sky, where the sun would be at

the time. This gesture, was accompanied by the expression *Iz Teotl*, "*There our god will be;*" which recalls the period, when emigrating from Aztlan, this people knew no other divinity than the sun, and were addicted to no sanguinary rite.

The number thirteen, by its multiples, affords proportions which the Mexicans used, to preserve an agreement between their ritual and civil calendars. A civil year of 365 days, contains a day more than 28 small periods of 13 days: the cycle of 52 years being divided into four epocha of 13 years, the supernumery days form at the end of each indiction a small entire period; and an epoch contains 365 of these periods, or as many weeks of 13 days, as the year has civil days. A year of the ritual almanac has twenty half lunations, or two hundred and sixty days, and this same number of days contains fifty-two half decades, or small periods of five days each. The Mexicans, then, found in the concordance of these two reckonings of the moon and sun, their favourite numbers of five, thirteen, twenty, and fifty-two.\*

In the same manner as the Mexicans, speaking of the year of a cycle, placed the cardinal numbers *ce*, *ome*, &c. before the names of the four hieroglyphics, Rabbit, Cane, Flint, and House, they joined in their paintings, the signs of these numbers, to the signs of the years. The mode was the same as that employed to distinguish the epocha. As the periodical series of the number had only thirteen terms, it was sufficient to add to the hieroglyphic, the circles or dots denoting the units.

The same contrivance of the concordance of two periodical series was employed to distinguish the days of the same year. Originally, among the Mexicans as among the Persians, each day of the

\* Humboldt, Researches, vol. 1. p. 296.

month had a name and particular sign. In the *Metzlapohualli*, or *reckoning of the moon*, these signs were distributed among the small cycles of the half lunation, so that a periodical series of thirteen terms, which were all ciphers, corresponded to a periodical series of twenty terms, containing hieroglyphical signs. In this series of days, we find the four grand signs, Rabbit, Cane, Flint, and House, by which the years of a cycle were denoted, and sixteen other signs, of an inferior order, were so distributed, that in an equal number of four, they separated the grand signs from each other.

Recollecting that each month was divided into four small periods of five days, we may conceive, that originally, the hieroglyphics, Rabbit, Cane, Flint, and House, indicated the beginning of these small periods in the years, the first day of which, bore one of the signs above named. In fact when the first of the month *Tititl*, has the sign *Calli*, the sixth of the following months will be *Tochtli*; the eleventh *Acatl*; and the sixteenth *Tecpatl*; each month will begin as it were with a dominical day, which will fall during the whole year on the same days of the month. The following, are the names and signs of the days.\*

1. Cepactli,	A Sea Animal.
2. Ehecatl,	Wind.
3. CALLI,	House.
4. Cuetzpalin,	Lizard.
5. Cohuatl,	Serpent.
6. Misquiztli,	Death, Death's Head.
7. Mazatl,	Buck or Stag.
8. TOCHTLI,	Rabbit.
9. Atl,	Water.
10. Itzcuintli,	Dog.

\* This is the arrangement of the days in the fifteenth month, —Clavigero.







11. Ozomatli,	Ape.
12. Malinalli,	Grass.
13. Acatl,	Reed.
14. Ocelotl,	Tiger.
15. Quauhtli,	Eagle.
16. Cascaquauhtli,	King of the Vultures.
17. Olin Tonatiuh,	Course of the Sun.
18. Tecpatl,	Flint.
19. Quiahuatl,	Rain.
20. Xochitl,	A Flower.

The numbers thirteen and twenty, having no common factors in the almanac of half lunations, the two periodical series cannot twice correspond to the same terms, till after thirteen, multiplied by twenty, or two hundred and sixty days. In a year the first day of which, has the sign *Cipactli*, there is no half lunation that begins with the sign *Cipactli* in the first thirteen months; but after the month *pachtli*, the same signs return, with the same cyphers. To avoid this cause of error, the Mexicans faithful to their principle of not naming the number of small periods, of thirteen days, had again recourse to the contrivance of periodical series. They formed a third series of nine signs, called the *lords or masters of the night*, namely.

Xiuhteucli tletl,	Fire or master of the year.
Texpatl,	Flint.
Xochitl,	Flower.
Cinteotl,	Goddess of maize.
Miquiztli,	Death.
Atl,	Water.
Tlazalteotl,	Goddess of love.
Tepeyollotli,	A spirit of the mountains.
Quauhuatl,	Rain.

The preference to the number nine, has probably

been given, because of the facility with which it divides itself, forty times into three hundred and sixty days. The Nemontemi, or five complimentary days, are not added to these terms of the third series, called by the Indians, the *companions* of the signs of the days. We should observe, and this circumstance may prove embarrassing in the Mexican chronology, that five of the *companions*, bear the same name with the hieroglyphics of the days; but according to the reveries of American astrologers, the spirits that belong to the series of the nine signs, govern the night, while the other twenty signs, govern the day.

As there are twenty signs of the day, and nine *companions* of the night, the same companion must correspond every nine, multiplied by twenty, or one hundred and eighty days, to the same hieroglyphics; but it is impossible, that in the same year of three hundred and sixty-five days, the same terms of three series, namely, the number, the sign of the day, and the companion, can coincide more than once.

The employment of the third periodical series, by means of which two days, that have the same number, and the same hieroglyphics are distinguished, for instance, 1 *Cipactli*, corresponding to the 9th of January, and the 26th of September, was unknown to the greater part of the Spanish historians. It was discovered by Mr. Gama, from the Mexican manuscripts of the Indian, Christopher del Castillo. The better to explain this intricate chronological system, we place in the appendix, a table which unites the divisions of the ritual and civil, and their correspondence with the Gregorian calendar.\*

XXXI. There was no month, in which the Mexi-

\* See Note B. Appendix.

cans did not celebrate some festival, either fixed on a certain day, or moveable, from being annexed to some sign which did not correspond with the same day in every year. The principal moveable festivals, were sixteen in number, among which the fourth was that of the god of wine, and the thirteenth, that of the god of fire. The better to convey an idea of the Mexican superstition, we shall notice here the principal stated festivals.

On the second day of the first month, the great festival to Tlaloc was celebrated by the offering of children, purchased for that purpose, and by a gladiatorial sacrifice; infants were also sacrificed to propitiate the same deity, from time to time, in the months corresponding to March and April, in order to obtain seasonable rains.

On the first of the second month, which, in the first year of the cycle, corresponded to the 18th of March, a most solemn festival in honour of the god *Xipe*, was holden, at which the sacrifices were extremely cruel. The victims were dragged by the hair to the upper area of the temple, where, after being slain in the usual manner, they were flayed by the priests, who clothed themselves in the skins, which they wore for some days. The owners of the victims were required to fast for twenty days, after which they feasted on the flesh of the sacrifice. Thieves who had stolen gold or silver, were by command of the law, sacrificed with the prisoners on this occasion. The circumstance of skinning the victims, obtained for this month the name of *Tlacaxipehualiztli*, or the *skinning of men*. This festival, was attended by military exercises, at which the nobles celebrated with songs the glorious actions of their ancestors. In Tlascala, all ranks had dances, at which performers dressed in skins of animals, and embroidery of gold and silver. Hence the festival, as well as the month,



had the name of *Coailhuatl*, or the general festival.

In the third month, which began on the 7th of April, the second festival of Tlaloc was celebrated with the sacrifice of children. The skins of the victims, offered to the god Xipe, in the preceding month, were carried in procession to a temple called *Jopico*, within the inclosure of the greater temple, and there deposited in a cave. In this month, the *Xochimanqui*, or dealers in flowers, celebrated the festival of their goddess *Coatlicue*, and presented her garlands of flowers, curiously woven, and untainted by the breath of any one. The ministers of the temples watched nightly during this month, whence it took the name of *Tozoztontli*, or little watch.

The fourth month was called *Hueitozoztli*, or great watch; because of the priests, and all the people keeping vigils. They drew blood from their ears, eyes, brows, noses, tongues, arms, and thighs, to expiate the sins of the senses, and ostentatiously exposed at their doors, the leaves of the sword grass, the instruments of their penance. In this manner, they prepared themselves for the festival of the goddess Centeotl, which was celebrated with sacrifices of human victims and animals, particularly of quails, and with many warlike exercises, performed before her temple. Female children, carried ears of maize to the shrine, and after offering them to the goddess, placed them in the public granaries, in full faith, that the ears thus hallowed, would preserve the rest of the grain from destructive insects. This month commenced on the 27th of April.

The fifth month, which began upon the 17th of May, was almost wholly festive. The first of the four principal festivals of the Mexicans, was in honour of their great god *Tezcatlipoca*. Daily,

for ten days, a priest dressed in the vestments of the deity, went out of the temple with a bunch of flowers in his hand, and a small flute of clay, which made a very shrill sound. Turning towards the east, and afterwards, to the other three principal winds, he sounded the flute loudly, and then taking up a little dust from the earth, with his finger, he put it to his mouth and swallowed it. Upon hearing the sound of the flute, all kneeled down; criminals were thrown into the utmost terror and consternation, and with tears, implored that god to pardon their transgressions, and preserve them from detection; warriors prayed for courage and strength, for victory, and a multitude of prisoners; and the people, also eating of the dust, supplicated with fervour, the clemency of the gods. On the day preceding the festival, the nobles carried a new habit to the idol, which the priests immediately put upon it; keeping the old one, as a relique, in some repository of the temple; they adorned the image with gold and beautiful feathers, and withdrew the veil, which usually covered it, that it might be seen and adored by the multitude. When the day of the festival arrived, the people flocked to the lower area of the temple. A procession was formed, in which the idol, having wreaths of maize upon the forehead and neck, was borne on a litter, ornamented with similar wreaths, by two priests, whilst two others attended to offer incense. The maize wreath was an emblem of drought, which was deprecated, or, as we should rather suppose, of the abundance desired; and was worn on this occasion, by all persons of distinction, who scattered flowers and odoriferous herbs in their march, while, the people flagelated themselves with knotted cords. When the procession and discipline were finished, the idol was carried to the altar, and rich offerings were made to it, of

gold, gems, flowers, feathers, animals, and provisions, prepared by the virgins and other women, who, on account of some particular vow, assisted for that day, in the service of the temple. These provisions were borne in the procession by the virgins, led by a respectable priest, dressed in a strange fantastical habit, and were, afterwards, carried by the young men, to the habitations of the ministers of the altar.

Subsequently the victim, representing the god *Tezcatlipoca*, was sacrificed. He was selected for his beauty and grace, a year before the festival, and during that time was dressed in a habit similar to that of the idol. He was permitted to perambulate the city accompanied by a strong guard, and was adored every where, as the living image of the supreme deity. Twenty days before the festival, he espoused four beautiful girls, and on the five days preceding it, he partook of sumptuous entertainments, and enjoyed freely, all the pleasures of life. On the day of the festival, he was led by a numerous attendance to the temple of *Tezcatlipoca*, but his wives were dismissed by the way. He accompanied the idol in the procession, and when the hour of sacrifice arrived, was stretched upon the altar, and the high priest, with great reverence, opened his breast and pulled out his heart. His body was not, as in case of other victims, thrown down the stairs, but was carried in the arms of the priests, and beheaded at the bottom of the temple. His head was strung up in the *Tzompantli*, among the skulls of the victims sacrificed to *Tezcatlipoca*, and his legs and arms, were dressed, and prepared for the tables of the nobles. After the sacrifice, a grand dance was performed by the collegiate youths, and the nobles who were present at the festival. At sunset, the virgins of the temple, made a new offering, of bread baked with honey, which

being consecrated before the altar, was destined to reward the youths who should be the victors in a race down the stairs of the temple; the conquerors in this gymnastic contest, also received a garment, and what was yet more valued, the plaudits of the priests and spectators. The festival was concluded by dismissing from the seminaries, all the youths and virgins who were marriageable. The youths who remained, mocked the others, with satirical and humorous raillery, and threw at them, handfulls of rushes and other things, upbraiding them with leaving the service of their god, for the pleasures of matrimony; the priests always granting them indulgence in this emanation of youthful vivacity.

In this month, the first festival of Huitzilopochtli, was also celebrated. The priests made a statue of this god, of the full size of a man; the flesh being of *Tzohualli*, an edible plant, and the bones of the wood *Mizquitl*. It was dressed in cotton, with a mantle of feathers; on the head was a small parasol of paper, adorned with beautiful plumes, and crowned by a blood stained knife of flint stone; upon the breast a plate of gold, and painted representations of human bones, and a mangled carcass; indicating either the power of this god in battle, or the terrible revenge, which according to their mythology, he took on those who conspired against the honour and life of his mother. This statue, was borne on a litter, sustained by four wooden serpents, by four principal officers of the army, from the place where it was formed, to its destined altar. A circle of youths connected by arrows, which they held in their hands, carried before the litter a piece of paper more than fifteen perches long, on which, the glorious actions of the divinity were represented, and which they sung to the sound of musical instruments.

The morning of the festival was celebrated by a great sacrifice of quails, attended by the king, the priests, and the people. Of this great profusion of birds, part was dressed for the king's table, and the remainder reserved for a future occasion. Every person present at the festival, carried a clay censer, in which he burned a quantity of bitumen, in offering to the god, and the residuum of the fuel used, was afterwards collected in a large stove, called *Tlexictli*. Hence this festival was called, "the incensing of Huitzilopochtli." Immediately after, followed the dance of the virgins and priests. The women dyed their faces, and adorned their arms with red feathers, on their heads they wore garlands of crisp leaves of maize, and in their hands, carried cleft canes grasping flags of cotton or paper. The faces of the priests were coloured black, their foreheads bound with small shields of paper, their lips daubed with honey, and their loins girded with paper aprons; each held a sceptre, at the extremity of which, was a flower and tuft of feathers. Upon the edge of the stove two men danced, bearing on their backs, cages of pine. During the dance, the priests, from time to time, touching the earth with the extremity of their sceptres, as if they rested upon them. These ceremonies had their particular signification and the dance was, from the festival called *Tox-cachocola*. In another place, the courtiers and warriors performed a similar game. The musical instruments, usually placed in the centre, were on this occasion kept without and hid, so that their sound was heard, but the musicians were invisible.

One year also, before this festival, the prisoner destined for sacrifice to Huitzilopochtli, was selected, and received the name of *Ixteocali*, "wise lord of heaven." Like the victim to Tezcatlipoca,



he was allowed great freedom, but the latter, only was adored. On the day of the festival he was clad in a curious habit, of painted paper, and on his head, a mitre of eagle feathers was placed, surmounted with a plume. Upon his back he carried a small net, covered by a bag, and thus accoutred, he mingled in the dance of the courtiers. He was allowed to set the hour of the sacrifice, and at his pleasure, presented himself to the priests, in whose arms, and not upon the altar, the sacrificer broke his breast, and tore out his heart. When the sacrifice was ended, the priests began a dance, which continued during the remainder of the day, excepting the intervals employed to repeat the offerings of incense. At this festival, also, the priests made a slight cut on the breast and abdomen of the children of both sexes, born within the preceding year. This was the sign by which the nation specially acknowledged itself consecrated to the worship of its protecting god; and, hence, several authors have inferred, that the rite of circumcision was established among the Mexicans. But, if possibly, the people of Yucatan and the Totonacas used such a rite, it was not practised by the Mexicans, nor by any other nation of the empire.

In the sixth month, which began upon the sixth of June, the third festival of the god Tlaloc, was celebrated. The temple was strewed in a curious manner with rushes, from the lake of *Citlaltepec*, and upon this occasion the principles of order and justice were singularly violated. The priests employed to gather rushes, assailed with impunity all passengers whom they met, plundering, and sometimes even stripping them naked, and beating them if they made resistance.

At the festival, they eat of gruel, called *Etzalli*; from which the month took the name of *Etzalqualiztli*. Several prisoners were sacrificed, clothed in

the habits of the god and his companions, their hearts cast in a vortex of the lake, in the presence of a great crowd of people, where two children of either sex, were at the same time immolated to obtain the necessary rain for the fields. Upon this occasion, such ministers of the temple, as in the course of that year, had either been negligent in office, or convicted of a misdemeanor, not capital, were expelled from the priesthood, and received a severe chastisement by being repeatedly immersed in the water.

In the seventh month, commencing the 26th of June, was held the festival of *Huixtocihuatl*, the goddess of salt. On the preceding day the women engaged in a dance, in which they were gracefully connected by wreaths of flowers, and adorned by garlands of wormwood. A female prisoner representing the goddess, was placed in the centre. The dance, accompanied by a song, continued during the night; and in the morning that of the priests began, which lasted the whole day, without other interruption than the sacrifice: The priests wore decent garments, and held in their hands beautiful yellow flowers, called *Cempoalxochitl*, or Indian carnations. At sunset, the prisoner was slaughtered, and the festival concluded with sumptuous banquets.

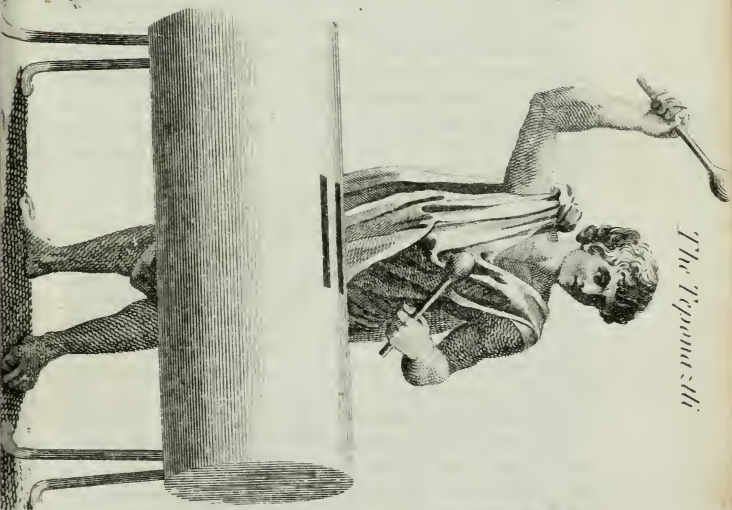
The whole of this month was devoted to festivity. The people wore their best dresses, dances and amusements in their gardens were frequent, the populace pursued the chase, and the nobles amused themselves with warlike exercises in the field, or in vessels upon the lake.

In the eighth month, which began upon the 16th of July, a solemn festival was celebrated in honour of the goddess *Centeotl*, under the name of *Xilonen*, her name changing, as we have already observed, according to the state of the maize. On this festi-

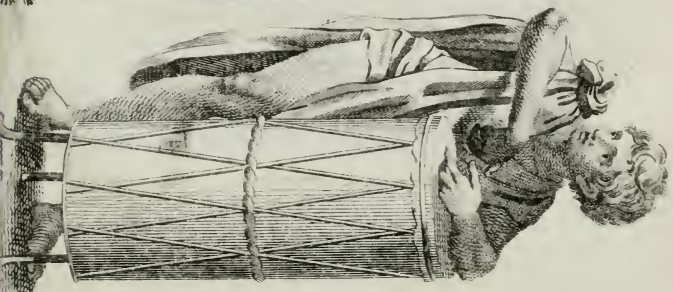
*The Jucavalli*



*The Tepomacchi*



*The Hubball*





val, they called her Xilonen, because the ear of the maize, whilst the grain was still tender, was called Xilotl. It continued eight days, during which, the dance was uninterrupted in her temple; and the king and nobles distributed meat and drink to the populace. Offerings were made to the priests; the nobles entertained each other, making reciprocal presents of gold, silver, beautiful feathers, and curious animals; and they sung the glorious actions of their ancestors, and the nobleness and antiquity of their families. At sunset, when the feasting of the populace was ended, the priests had their dance, which continued four hours; and on that account there was a splendid illumination in the temple. The last day was celebrated by a dance of the nobles and warriors, among whom was also a female prisoner, the representative of the goddess, who was sacrificed at its close with other victims. The festival and the month had also the name *Hueitecuilhuatl*, the great feast of the lords.

In the ninth month, which began on the 5th of August, the second festival of *Huitzilopochtli* was observed, on which, beside the usual ceremony, all the idols in the temples, and private houses were adorned with flowers; whence the month was called *Tlaxochimaco*. The night preceding the festival was employed in preparing the meats for the next day. The nobles of both sexes danced together, the arms of the one resting on the shoulders of the other. This dance, which lasted until the evening, finished with the sacrifice of prisoners. In this month also, the festival of *Jacateuctli*, the god of commerce, was held, accompanied with sacrifices.

In the tenth month, beginning on the 25th of August, was the festival of *Xiuhteuctli*, god of fire. Some months preceding it, the priests brought from the forests a large tree, which they planted in the



under area of the temple. The day before the festival they stripped off its branches and bark, and adorned it with painted paper, and it was then revered as the image of the god. The owners of prisoners sacrificed on this occasion, dyed their bodies with red ochre, to resemble in some measure the colour of fire, and were dressed in their best garments. They accompanied their prisoners to the temple, and passed the night in singing and dancing with them. On the succeeding day, at the hour of sacrifice, they bound the hands and feet of the victims, and sprinkled the powder of Jauhtli in their faces, to benumb their senses, that their torments might be less painful. Then they began to dance, each with his victim upon his back, whom in succession they threw into a large fire, kindled in the area, from which they soon after drew them, with hooks of wood, to complete the sacrifice upon the altar in the ordinary way. This month, bore the name *Xocohuetzi*, or the maturity of fruits. The Tlascalans called the ninth month *Miccailheuitl*, or the festival of the dead; because, in that month they made oblations for the souls of the deceased; and the tenth, *Hueimiccailhuil*, or the grand festival of the dead; because, in that, they wore mourning, and lamented the decease of their ancestors.

In the eleventh month, solemn honours were paid to *Teteoinan*, the mother of the gods. Five days before the commencement of this month, which was on the 14th of September, all festivities ceased. The dance which occupied the first eight days, was lugubrious, and without music. At its conclusion, a female prisoner was invested with the habiliments of the goddess, and received, during four days, the kindest attentions from the women, and particularly from the midwives. After which, she was led to the temple and sacrificed; not how-

ever, in the common mode, but being placed on the shoulders of another woman, she was beheaded. Her skin was stripped off, and carried by a youth, with numerous attendants, as an offering to the god *Huitzilopochtli*, in remembrance of the inhuman sacrifice of the princes of Colhuacan; at the same time, four prisoners were immolated, in commemoration of the four Xochimilcans, who had been sacrificed during their captivity in Colhuacan. In this month also, the armies were reviewed, and recruited; the nobles and populace performed the religious duty of sweeping the temples, whence the month had the name of *Ochpaniztli*, or sweeping; and the streets and aqueducts were repaired with many superstitious rites.

In the twelfth month, beginning upon the 4th of October, the Mexicans celebrated the arrival of the gods, expressed by the word *Teotleco*, their name for the month and the festival. On the 16th day they covered all the temples, and the corner stones of the streets of the city, with green branches. On the 18th, the gods, according to their tradition, began to arrive; the first of whom, was Tezcatlipoca. Before his sanctuary, a mat of palm tree leaves was spread, and sprinkled with flour of maize.

All the preceding night, the high priest watched, and when he discovered footsteps upon the flour, impressed doubtless by a confederate, cried out, "Our great god has arrived." Upon which, the other priests, accompanied by the people, repaired thither to adore him, and celebrate his advent, with hymns and dances, during the rest of the night. On the following days, other gods successively arrived, and on the twentieth, when they had all come, a number of youths, dressed in the form of various monsters, danced around a large fire, into which, from time to time, they threw

prisoners, who were consumed as burnt offerings. At sun set all delivered themselves up to debauch, justifying their excesses, by the belief, that the wine drank, would serve to wash the feet of their divinities.

In the thirteenth month, beginning on the 24th of October, was the festival of the gods of the water, and of the mountains. But the name *Tepcilhuitl*, which it bore, related only to the latter. On this occasion, small mountains of paper were raised, on which were placed some little serpents of wood or roots, and idols called *Ehecatotontin*, covered with a species of paste. These were worshipped upon the altars as representations of the mountain deities, by hymns, and the offering of incense and meats. Prisoners were also sacrificed, to whom a particular name was given, alluding, probably, to some mystery of which we are ignorant. They were clothed in painted paper, besmeared with elastic gum, and carried in procession in litters, after which they were slain in the usual manner.

In the fourteenth month, which commenced on the 13th of November, was the festival of *Mixcoatl*, the goddess of the chase. It was preceded by four days of rigid and general fasting, accompanied by effusion of blood, during which, arrows and darts, for the supply of the arsenals were made; and also, small javelins, which, with some pieces of pine and meats, were placed one day upon the tombs of relatives, and on the next burned. When the fast was over, the inhabitants of Mexico and Tlatelolco, went out to a general chase in the neighbouring mountains; and all the animals which they caught, were brought, with great rejoicings, to the cities, and sacrificed to the goddess; the king uniting in the chase, and assisting at the altar. This month had also the name of *Quecholli*,

because at this season the beautiful Flamingo, thus called by the Mexicans, made its appearance on the banks of the lake.

In the fifteenth month, the first day of which corresponded with the 3d day of December, the third and principal festival of *Huitzilopochtli*, and his brother was celebrated. On the first day of the month, the priests formed statues of those gods, of different seeds, cemented together with the blood of children that had been sacrificed, in which the bones were supplied by pieces of wood of the acacia. These were placed upon the principal altar of the temple, and watched by the priests during the night. And on the following day, received their benediction, which was also given to a small quantity of water, preserved in the temple for sprinkling the face of any new king of Mexico, or commander in chief of the armies. Of this water, the latter was also required to drink. When the statues were consecrated, a dance of both sexes began, and continued daily for three or four hours during the month. At this festival a vast deal of blood was shed. Four days before its commencement, the owners of the victims observed a fast, and painted their bodies of various colours. In the morning of the twentieth day, a solemn procession was made. One priest carried a serpent of wood, high in his hands, called *Ezepamitl*, the badge of the gods of war; another bore a standard, such as was used in the armies; after them came a third, who carried the statue of the god *Painalton*, the vicar of *Huitzilopochtli*; then followed the victims with other priests, and lastly the people. The procession marched from the greater temple, to the district of *Teotlacho*, where it stopped, while two prisoners of war, and some purchased slaves, were sacrificed; thence it proceeded to *Tlatelolco*, Po-

potla, and Chapoltepec, and other districts, and afterwards re-entered the temple.

This circuit of nine or ten miles, on which sacrifices of quails, and probably human victims were made at every stage, consumed the greater part of the day. When arrived at the temple, the statue of Painalton, and the standard, were placed upon the altar of Huitzilopochtli; the king offered incense to the two statues of seeds, and then ordered another procession to be made round the temple, at the conclusion of which, and at the close of the day, the rest of the prisoners and slaves were immolated. That night, also, the priests kept watch, and the next morning they carried the statue in paste of Huitzilopochtli, to the great hall of the temple, and there, in the presence only of the king, four principal priests, and four superiors of the seminaries, the priest *Quetzalcoatl*, who was the chief of the *Tlamacazqui* or *penance-doers*, threw a dart at the statue, which pierced it through and through. When the god was supposed to have been slain, one of the principal priests cut out the heart and gave it to the king to eat. The body was divided into two parts, one was given to the people of Tlatelolco, and the other to the Mexicans. Each part was again divided into four, for the four quarters of the city, and each of these into as many minute particles, as there were men in each quarter. This ceremony was termed *Teocualo*, which signifies, the “*The edible God.*” The women never tasted this sacred paste, probably, because they had no concern with the profession of arms. We are ignorant whether the same use was made of the statue of *Tlacahuepan*. The month has the name of *Panquetzaliztli*, or the raising of the standard; and in it, the people employed themselves in renewing the boundaries, and repairing the inclosures of their fields.



In the sixteenth month, which began upon the 23d of December, the fifth and last festival of the gods of water and the mountains, took place. The court prepared for it with the usual austerities, and by oblations of copal, and other aromatic gums. The people formed little figures of the mountains, which they consecrated to those gods, and small idols of various edible seeds, of which when they had worshipped them, they opened the breasts, and cut out the hearts with a weaver's shuttle, and afterwards cut off the heads, in imitation of the rites of the sacrifices. The body was divided by the heads of families amongst their domestics, in order, that by eating of it, they might be preserved from certain distempers, to which persons negligent in the worship of those divinities, were supposed to be subject. They burned the habits in which they had dressed these idols, and preserved the ashes with the utmost care in their oratories, with the vessels in which the images had been formed. Besides these rites, usually observed in private houses, there were sacrifices of human victims in the temple. For four days preceding the festival, a strict fast was observed, accompanied with effusion of blood. This month was called *Atemoztli*, a descent of the water.

In the seventeenth month, which began upon the 12th of January, the festival of the goddess *Ilamateuctli* was holden. A female prisoner who represented her, clothed in the habit of the idol, was made to dance alone, to a tune which some old priests sung to her, and she was permitted to express her affliction at her approaching death; which however, was esteemed a bad omen from other victims. At sunset of the day of the festival, the priests adorned with the ensigns of various gods, sacrificed her in the usual manner; and afterwards cut off her head; and one of them taking it in his

hand began a dance, in which he was joined by the rest. The priests during this festival made a race down the stairs of the temple; and on the following day, the populace entertained themselves with games similar to the Lupercalia of the Romans; for running through the streets, they beat all the women they met with little bags of hay. In the same months they kept the festival of *Mictlanteuctli*, god of hell, at which they made a nocturnal sacrifice of a prisoner; and, also, the second festival of *Jacateuctli*, the god of the merchants.

In the eighteenth and last month, which began on the first of February, the second festival of the god of fire was observed. On the tenth day of the month, the youth went out to hunt the beasts of the wood, and the birds of the lake. On the sixteenth, the fires of the temple and private houses were extinguished, and rekindled before the idol of the god, which was richly adorned on the occasion; with gems and beautiful feathers. The hunters presented all their spoils to the priests, one part of which, was consumed in burnt offerings to their gods and the other was sacrificed, and afterwards dressed for the tables of the nobility and clergy. The women made oblations of *Tamalli*, which they afterwards distributed among the hunters. One of the ceremonies observed upon this occasion, was that of boring and putting rings in the ears of all the children of each sex. But the greatest singularity attending it, was its freedom from human sacrifice.

They celebrated likewise in this month, the second festival of the mother of the gods, respecting which, however, we know nothing, except the ridiculous custom of lifting up the children, by the ears into the air, from a belief that they would become higher in stature.

After the eighteen months of the Mexican year were completed, upon the twenty-first of February the five days called *Nemontemi* commenced, during which no festival was celebrated, nor any enterprise undertaken, because they were reckoned *dies infausti* or unlucky days. The child born on any of them, if a boy, had the name of *Nemoquichtli*, *useless man*; if a girl, that of *Nencihuatl*, *useless woman*.

Among the festivals annually celebrated, the most solemn were the *Tleoxihuitl*, or divine years, having the rabbit for their denominative character. The sacrifices were then more numerous, the oblations more abundant, and the dances more solemn. In like manner, the festivals at the beginning of every period of thirteen years, were attended with additional pomp and gravity.

But the festival celebrated every fifty-two years was by far the most splendid, and most solemn. On the last night of the cycle, the people extinguished the fires of the temples and houses, and broke their vessels, earthen pots, and all other kitchen utensils, thus preparing for the end of the world, which they expected at the termination of each cycle. The priests endued with the dresses and ensigns of their gods, accompanied by the people, issued from the city, directing their way to the mountain *Huixachila*, near *Itztapalapan*, six miles distant from the capital. They regulated their journey in some measure, by observation of the stars, that they might arrive at the mountain a little before midnight, on the top of which the new fire was to be kindled. In the mean time the people remained in the utmost suspense and solicitude; hoping that with the new fire, a new cycle would be granted to mankind, and dreading that the refusal of heaven to rekindle it, would be followed by the destruction of the human race. *Husbands*

covered the faces of their pregnant wives with the leaves of the aloe, and shut them up in granaries, lest they should be converted into wild beasts and devour them. They also covered the faces of their children, to preserve them from being transformed into mice. Those who did not attend the priests, mounted upon terraces, to observe the event of the ceremony. The office of kindling the fire on this occasion belonged exclusively to a priest of *Copolco*, one of the districts of the city. The instruments for this purpose, were, as we have already mentioned, two pieces of wood, and the hearth on which the fire was kindled, was the breast of some brave prisoner, whom they sacrificed. As soon as the fire was lighted, shouts of joy broke from the multitude, and beacon fires blazed on the mountain. The overjoyed people snatched up portions of the sacred fire, and strove with each other who should carry it most speedily to their houses. The priests bore it to the greater temple of Mexico, from whence, all the inhabitants of that capital were supplied. During the thirteen days following the renewal of the fire, which were the intercallary ones, the Mexicans employed themselves, in repairing and whitening the public and private buildings, and in furnishing themselves with new dresses and domestic utensils, in order that every thing might have the appearance of commencing with the new cycle. On the first day of the year, corresponding to the 26th of February, no person was permitted to taste water before mid-day. At that hour the sacrifices began, the number of which was suited to the grandeur of the occasion. Every place resounded with the voice of gladness and mutual congratulations on account of the new era, which heaven had granted. The illuminations during the first nights were extremely magnificent; the ornaments of dress, entertainments, dances,

and public games, were particularly splendid. Amongst the last, amidst an immense concourse of people, and the most lively demonstrations of joy, the game of the flyers, which we shall describe in another place, was exhibited.



## CHAPTER VII.

- I. *Form of Government of the Mexican Nation, an Elective Monarchy....* II. *Electors, how created....* III. *Installation of the King....* IV. *Power of the Monarch, his Ministers.....* V. *Embassadors.....* VI. *Couriers.....* VII. *Posts....* VIII. *The Nobility....* IX. *The Laws regulating Property...X. The Revenues of the State. ....XI. Judicial Establishment....XII. Legislation and Laws.....XIII. Slavery.....XIV. Punishments....XV. The Military System of Mexico.*

I. The government of the Mexican nation, during its migratory state, and for twenty-seven years after the foundation of the capital, was aristocratic. In the year 1352, as we have seen, it was converted into a monarchy by the elevation of Acamapitzin to the throne. The crown was never hereditary, but always elective. The first choice was most probably indicated by the voice of the whole nation. But the election of the second king was made by electors, selected by, and representing the nobles; and this mode was ever after preserved. In the commencement of the monarchy, the scope for selection was unlimited; and Acamapitzin returned his sceptre to the people, that they might choose a successor most agreeable to themselves. The choice fell upon his son, who was succeeded by his brother; and from the accession of Chimalpopoca, it would seem, that the crown was settled in his family, and that the election was always made from the brothers, or if there were none, from the nephews of the last reigning monarch, and that, no regard was paid to primogeniture. This singu-

lar system obviated in some measure, the evil of hereditary succession; exciting the members of the royal family to the acquisition of those qualities, which rendered them competent to fulfil the duties of the throne, and which might make them acceptable to the nation. But it offered also frequent occasions for intrigue and dissension. Yet, the annals of Mexico contain no instance of a contest for the crown, until after the subjugation of Montezuma. In Acolhuacan and Tacuba, the sovereignty was hereditary; the sons succeeding their fathers, not according to the order of their birth, but according to their rank; those born of the queen, or principal wife, being preferred. But from those the reigning king might nominate his successor.

II. The electors, were chosen by the nobles, from the first rank of the nobility, and commonly from the royal family, for the occasion only. Their office expired with the first exercise of their functions; and others were immediately selected. If a vacancy happened in their number, it was instantly supplied by a new appointment. In the time of Itzcoatl, the kings of Acolhuacan and Tacuba, were added to this college; but their office was merely honorary. They formally ratified the choice of the four electors, but never interfered with the election. After due funeral honours had been rendered to the deceased king, the electoral college was convened; and when a choice was made, the honorary electors and the chief nobles were summoned to the installation.

III. A procession having been formed, in which the feudatories appeared with their distinctive banners, the allied princes conducted the monarch elect, to the temple. His deportment on this occasion was extremely humble. No ensign of royalty was apparent, and he was even stripped of all clothing, save the *Maxtlatl*, or girdle round the

loins. He was aided to mount the steps of the sanctuary, by two officers of the court, and was received by the high priest, attended by the most respectable ministers of the altar. The king having worshipped the chief idol by touching the earth with his hand, and afterwards conveying it to his mouth, the priest covered his body with a black unguent, and besprinkled him four times with water, which had been consecrated at the great festival of Huitzilopochtli; using on this occasion a besom made of cedar, willow, and corn leaves. He was then clad in a mantle, on which were painted skulls and bones of the dead, over his head were thrown two cloaks, one red, and the other blue, covered with like emblems of mortality. A gourd was suspended from his neck, containing a powder deemed a preventive against disease, sorcery, and treason. And a censer and bag of copal were given to him, that he might offer incense to the gods. After this act of devotion, which the king performed on his knees, the high priest, the allied sovereigns, and the principal nobles, made him studied harangues; congratulating him on his elevation, descanting on the obligations he had assumed, and earnestly recommending zeal for justice and religion, and the defence of his kingdom. And Gomara affirms, that he was required to swear, that he would maintain the ancient religion and laws, and would make the sun observe his course, the clouds to pour down rain, the rivers to flow, and all fruits to ripen. These ceremonies being completed, the king descended to the lower area of the temple, where the mass of the nobles awaited to pay him homage, and to tender him rich presents of jewels and robes. Thence he proceeded to a secluded chamber of the temple, where, during four days, he observed a rigid fast, bathed twice a day, and after each bath, drew blood from his ears,

which mingled with copal he offered to Huitzilopochtli, with prayers for wisdom to govern his kingdom with justice and prudence. On the fifth day he was conducted to his palace, where, the great lords attended to receive a new investiture of their fiefs. Then followed the rejoicings of the people, accompanied by entertainments, dancing, and illuminations.

Previous to his coronation, it was necessary, according to the custom introduced by the first Montezuma, that the new sovereign should obtain in battle, the victims for the sacrifice attending it. Occasions for war were never wanting. The Mexican lust of dominion, and the restless impatience with which their yoke was borne, gave perpetual cause for hostilities.

The honour of crowning his Suzerain, pertained to the king of Acolhuacan. The diadem, called *copalli*, was a species of mitre, the forepart rising to a point, and the hinder falling over the neck. It was, according to the taste of the wearer, composed of plates of gold, or of gold tissue, ornamented with brilliant feathers. In his palace, the monarch wore the *Xiuhtilmatli*, a mantle of blue and white mixture; in the temple a robe of spotless white; on public occasions, his garment varied with his employment. One dress was appropriated to the trial of civil, another to the audit of criminal causes; and on all occasions he wore his crown. When he went abroad, he was attended by a great retinue of nobles, and preceded by an officer bearing three rods, made of gold and odorous wood, which, like fasces of the Roman consuls, intimated the presence of the sovereign power.

IV. In the commencement of the monarchy, the power of the kings was circumscribed, their authority was patriarchal, their conduct humane, and their revenue moderate. But their magnificence

and pomp, kept pace with the extension of the empire, and they usurped new powers until they attained that despotism, so conspicuous and absolute, in the reign of the last Montezuma.

The kings of Mexico and Acolhuacan, had, respectively, three councils, composed of nobles of the first rank, without whose advice, no measure of importance was undertaken. In the history of the conquest, we find Montezuma in frequent deliberation with his council on the pretensions of the Spaniards; and in the sixty-first painting of the collection of Mendoza, we have a representation of some of the counsellors seated in the council hall.

Among the officers of state, there were—the *Hueicalpixqui*, or grand treasurer, who received the provincial tributes, and kept a regular account of receipts and disbursements;—a sub-treasurer, who had charge of the crown jewels, and superintended the artists who wrought them;—another who directed the workers in feathers, who had their workshops in the royal aviary;—and a grand forester, who overlooked the royal chases, and kept them stocked with game.

V. Embassadors were selected from the nobles, distinguished by their birth and their eloquence. Several individuals were usually joined in a commission, and were known by a peculiar costume, consisting of a green habit similar to the scapulary or small cloak of some religious orders of Europe, from which hung locks of cotton. Their hair was entwined with gay plumes, to which like locks of various colours were also pendant. In their right hands they carried an arrow, with the point depressed, and in their left a shield, with a net for their provisions. Their persons were held sacred; and they were every where highly regarded, whilst they kept the great road leading to the place of their destination; but if they deviated from that, they



were no longer protected by their official character. When they arrived near to the state to which they were sent, they awaited an escort to conduct them to the residence allotted to public functionaries. These attendants, usually noble, burned incense before them, and presented them bouquets of flowers; and after they had reposed, led them to the hall of audience, where they were received by the prince and his council. The envoys having made a profound reverence, sat down upon their heels, in the middle of the hall, and in silence expected a sign, to speak. At the signal, the orator of the party, after another obeisance, delivered his message with a low voice, in a studied address, which was attentively heard by the prince and his ministers, who kept their heads so much inclined, that they almost touched their knees. When he had concluded, the ambassadors returned to their lodgings, where, after due consideration had been given to their embassy, they received an answer. In the meanwhile, they were abundantly supplied with provisions, and received some valuable presents; and upon their return, were attended from the city by the same persons who welcomed their arrival. If the state to which they were sent were friendly, it was deemed dishonourable to reject the presents offered; but if it were hostile, they could accept no gifts, without the express permission of their master.

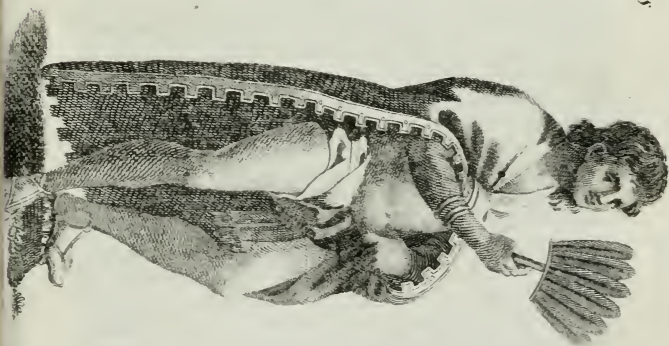
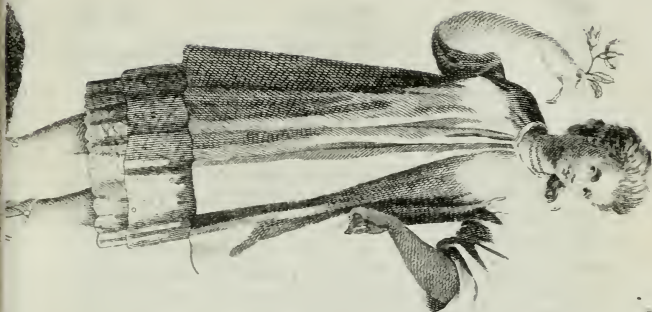
VI. The couriers, whom the Mexicans frequently employed, also bore distinguishing badges, indicating the nature of the tidings with which they were charged. If one of these carried news of defeat in battle, he wore his hair loose and disordered; and proceeded in gloomy silence to the palace, where, kneeling before the king, he communicated the intelligence. But, if he were the messenger of victory, his hair was bound with a coloured ribbon

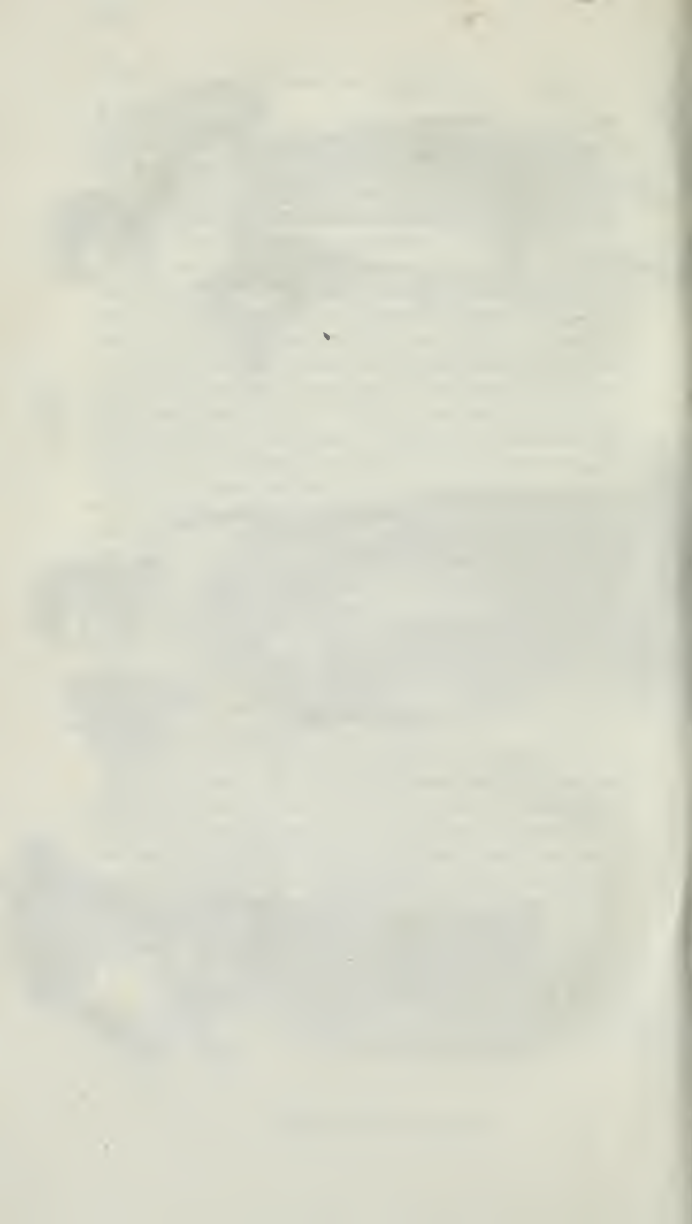
his body girt with a white cotton cloth, in his left hand he held a shield, in his right a sword, which he brandished as in conflict, and singing the glorious actions of the warriors, he was conducted by the people, with rejoicings, to the royal presence.

VII. In one respect, at least, the policy of the Mexicans was in advance of civilized Europe. They had a regular and excellent establishment of posts. In order that intelligence might be speedily conveyed, there were erected on all the highways, small towers about six miles distant from each other, where couriers were always in waiting to set out with dispatches. When one was sent off, he ran quickly to the next stage, and delivered to another, the pictorial writing or other matter with which he was charged; the second hastened with like speed; and thus by a rapid and uninterrupted conveyance, intelligence was sometimes transmitted three hundred miles in a single day. By this means, also, fresh fish were daily brought to Montezuma the Second, from the gulph of Mexico, two hundred miles distant from the capital. These couriers were exercised in running from their infancy, and in order to encourage them, the priests, under whom they were trained, bestowed rewards on the victors in the race.

VIII. The nobility of Anahuac was divided into several classes, all of which were included by the Spaniards under the name *Cacique*.\* Each had its peculiar privileges, and distinctive costume. By the latter, notwithstanding the Mexican dress was very simple, the character of the wearer was immediately understood. To the nobles alone, were allowed ornaments of gold and gems; and to them, from the time of the last Montezuma, exclusively

\* The word *Cacique*, is derived from Haiti; the Mexicans, called a lord, *Tlatoani*, and the higher nobles, *Pilli*, and *Teuctli*.

*Villas**Female Peasant*



belonged, the high offices of the court, the magistracy, and the army.

The highest rank of nobility in Mexico, Tlascalala, Huexotzinco, and in Cholula, was termed *Teuctli*. To obtain it, the candidate must have been of noble birth, have given proof in several battles of the highest courage, have attained mature age, and have possessed great wealth, in order to sustain the dignity. He was obliged beside to undergo a year of penance, consisting of perpetual fasts and effusion of blood, abstinence from all commerce with women, and unrepining endurance of insults, reproaches and indignities, inflicted for the purpose of trying his patience and fortitude. From a perforation of the cartilage of the nose, some grains of gold, the chief insignia of his rank were suspended. When about to be invested with the order, he was stripped of his penitential habit, and clothed with magnificent attire; his hair was braided with a ribbon of red leather, from which hung tassels of variegated plumes. The ceremony of investiture, was performed in the upper area of the temple, by a priest, who afterwards addressed the candidate in a congratulatory harangue. From thence he descended to the lower area, and joined other nobles in a dance appropriate to the occasion; which was succeeded by a sumptuous entertainment, at his expense, to the chief officers of the state, to whom he likewise made liberal presents. On such occasions, there were frequently consumed, according to some authors, from ten to sixteen hundred turkies, a proportionate quantity of deer, rabbits, and other animals, with an incredible quantity of cacao in various beverages, and of the choicest fruits of the country. The title *Teuctli*, was used as an agnomen to the proper name; as *Chememeca-teuctli*, *Pil-teuctli*. This order took precedence of all others in the senate, in sitting and



voting, and the members enjoyed the high honour of having a servant seated behind them on all occasions.

Titles of nobility were for the most part hereditary. Until the downfall of the empire many illustrious Aztec families, who laid the foundation of the city, preserved themselves in great splendour; and several branches of these ancient houses still exist, though obscured by misfortune and confounded with the vulgar.

IX. Throughout the empire, with the exception relating to the royal family, which we have mentioned, all the rights of the father descended to his sons, and in default of lineal heirs, to nephews or other collateral males. Territorial possessions were divided between the crown, the nobility, the communities, and the temples, and appropriate records were kept of these divisions, upon accurate maps. The lands of the crown were painted in purple, those of the nobles in scarlet, and those of the communities in yellow; and thus, at a glance, the extent and boundaries of the different estates were distinguished. After the conquest, the Spanish magistrates made use of these maps, to decide all disputes among the Indians, concerning the property or possession of lands.

The lands of the crown called *Tecpantlalli*, were usually granted to certain lords, called *Tecpanpouhque*, or *Tecpantlaca*, *people of the palace*; who enjoyed the temporary use and profits, upon condition of rendering to the king, some flowers and birds when they visited him, of superintending the erection and repair of the palaces and the cultivation of the royal gardens; and of waiting at court, and attending the monarch when he appeared in public. On the death of a usufructuary, his eldest son succeeded to his possessions and his du-

ties; but if he established himself elsewhere than at court, the lands reverted to the crown.

The lands called *Pillalli*, or *of the nobles*, were ancient possessions, transmitted by inheritance from father to son; or the rewards obtained, from the king, in recompense of services to the state. These were alienable, when granted without a prohibiting condition, but they could not be conveyed to plebians.

The inheritance descended in the order of primogeniture, but if the first born son were incapable of managing the estate, the father was at liberty, to appoint any of his sons, his heir; on condition that he secured a provision for the rest. A species of Salique law prevailed, at least in Tlascala; the daughters being excluded from the inheritance, lest the estate should fall to a stranger. The fiefs commenced at the time that Xolotl divided the lands of Anahuac among the Chechemecan and Acolhuacan lords, under the feudal conditions, of fealty, homage, aids, and military service. But the fiefs were few in number, and differed from those of the feudal system of Europe, not being perpetual in their nature, but subject to annual renewal of the form of investiture. The lands called *Altepetlalli*, or those of the communities of cities and villages, were divided into as many parts, as there were districts in the commune; and each district had exclusive possession of the part assigned to it. These were inalienable, and some of them were appropriated to the supply of provisions for the army.

X. The conquered provinces were tributary to the crown, in the fruits, animals, and minerals of the country, according to a rate prescribed; and a tax was assessed on all merchants and artists, which was paid in kind. In the capital of every province, magazines were built to receive the reve-

nues. Officers employed in this duty, were universally odious, as well on account of the office itself, as the severity used in its execution. Their badges of distinction were a small rod borne in one hand, and a fan of feathers in the other. The royal treasurers kept painted rolls, in which were described all the tributary places, and the quality and quantity of the revenues in each. In the collection of Mendoza, there are thirty-six paintings of this kind,\* and on each are represented the principal places of one or more provinces of the empire.

In order to give the reader an idea of the Mexican resources, we state some of the tributes.

The cities of *Xoconochco*, *Huehuetlan*, *Mazatlan*, and others upon the coast, paid annually to the crown, beside the dresses made of cotton, four thousand handfuls of feathers of different colours, two hundred bags of cacao, forty tiger skins, and a hundred and sixty birds, of various plumage. *Huaxjacac*, *Cojolopan*, *Atlacuechahuajan*, and other places, belonging to the Zapotecas, paid forty plates of gold of a determinate size, and twenty bags of cochineal: *Tlachquiancho*, *Azotlan*, twenty vases, of a certain measure, full of gold, in powder: *Tochtepec*, *Otlatitlan*, *Cozamalloapan*, *Michapan*, on the Mexican gulph, beside garments of cotton, gold, and cacao, contributed seventy-four thousand handfuls of feathers, six necklaces, two of the finest emeralds, and four, more ordinary; twenty ear-rings of amber, adorned with gold,

\* The thirty-six paintings begin with the 13th, and end with the 48th. In the copy of them published by Thevenot, the 21st and 22d, are wanting, and for the most part, the figures of the tributary cities. The copy published in Mexico, in 1770, is still less perfect, for it wants, the 21st, 22d, 38th, 39th, and 40th, of Mendoza's collection; and has a number of errors in the interpretation; but it has the advantage over Thevenot's, of having the figures of the cities, and of being all executed on plates.

and as many of chrystal; a hundred cups of liquid amber, and sixteen thousand balls of *ule*, or elastic gum. *Tepejacac*, *Quecholac*, *Tecamachalco*, *Acatzinco*, furnished four thousand sacks of lime, four thousand loads of *Atatli*, or solid canes, for building, and as many loads of smaller size, for darts, and eight thousand loads of *acajetl*, or reeds filled with aromatic substances. *Malinaltepec*, *Tlatcozauhtitlan*, *Olinallan*, *Ichcatlan*, *Qualac*, and other places of the warm regions, six hundred cups of honey, forty large basins of *tecozahuatl*, or yellow ochre, for painting, a hundred and sixty axes of copper, forty round plates of gold, ten small measures of fine turquoises, and one load of ordinary turquoises: *Quauhnahuac*, *Panchimalco*, *Atlacholac*, *Xiuhtepec*, *Huitzilac*, and other districts of the *Tlahuicas*, sixteen thousand pieces, or large sheets of paper, and four thousand *Xicalli*, natural vases, of different sizes: *Quauhtitlan*, *Tehuillojocan*, and other towns of the same vicinage, eight thousand mats, and as many seats or chairs. Other places contributed fuel, stone, beams, and planks, fit for buildings, and copal. Other tributaries were required, to send to the royal palaces and forests, birds and quadrupeds. Thus, the people of *Xilotepec*, *Michmalajan*, and other places in the country of the *Otomies*, contributed annually, forty live eagles. The *Matlatzincas*, who were subjected to the crown of Mexico, by *Axajacatl*, besides the tribute represented in the twenty-seventh painting of the collection of Mendoza, were compelled to cultivate a field, about seven hundred perches long, and half as broad, for the purpose of furnishing the royal army with provisions. These large contributions, the great presents which the governors of provinces, and the feudatory lords made to the king, together with the spoils of war, formed the great riches,

which excited so much admiration in the Spanish conquerors, and occasioned so much misery to his unfortunate subjects. The tributes, at first moderate and easy, became at last excessive and onerous. It is true, that a great part was expended for the benefit of the subjects, in the support of ministers and magistrates, in the reward of public services, in the relief of the indigent, particularly of the aged, widows, and orphans, the three classes most compassionated by the Mexicans, and also by opening the royal granaries, in times of great scarcity, to the nation; but how many of these unhappy people, who were unable to pay the tributes demanded from them, must have sunk under the weight of their misery, while the royal beneficence did not reach them! To oppressive taxes were added, the greatest rigour in collecting them. Whoever did not pay the tribute prescribed, was sold for a slave, in order to purchase with his liberty, what he could not gain by his industry.

XI. For the administration of justice, the Mexicans had various tribunals. At court, and in the more considerable places of the kingdom, there was a supreme magistrate, named *Cihuatcoatl*, whose authority was so great, that from the sentences pronounced by him, either in civil or criminal causes, no appeal was permitted. He had the appointment of the inferior judges; and the receivers of the royal revenues, within his district, rendered their accounts to him. Any one who used his insignia, or usurped his authority, was punished with death.

The tribunal of the *Tlacatecatl*, inferior to the first, was composed of three judges; namely, of the *Tlacatecatl*, who was the chief, from whom the tribunal took its name, and of two others, who were called *Quauhnochtli*, and *Tlanotlac*. They took cognizance of civil and criminal causes, in



the first and second instance, although sentence was pronounced in the name only of the *Tlacatecatl*. They met daily in the public hall, called *Tlatzontecojan*, or the place of judgment, to which belonged several other officers of justice, where they heard attentively, all litigations, and pronounced sentence according to the laws. If a cause was purely civil, there was no appeal from this court; but, if of a criminal nature, an appeal lay to the *Cihuatcoatl*. The sentence was published by the *Tepojotl*, or public cryer, and was executed by the *Quainochtli*, one of the three judges. The public cryer, and the executive minister of justice, were held in high esteem, as the representatives of the king.

In every district of the city resided a *Teuctli*, who was the deputy of the *Tlacatecatl*, elected annually by the people. He took cognizance in the first instance, of the causes within his district, and daily reported to, and received orders from, the *Cihuatcoatl*, or the *Tlacatecatl*. Besides these *Teuctli*, there were in every district commissaries, elected in the same manner, named *Centectlapixque*, but they do not appear to have been judges, but patriarchal guardians, charged with the conduct of a certain number of families. Next to the *Teuctli* were the *Taquitlatoque*, or bailiffs, who carried the notifications of the magistrates, and summoned the accused; and the *Topilli*, or goaler. In Acolhuacan, the judicial power was divided amongst seven principal cities. The judges remained in their tribunals from sunrise until evening. Their meals were brought to them; and that they might not be distracted by care for their families, nor be open to corruption, they had lands and labourers assigned to them which pertaining to their offices passed to their successors. In causes of importance, they never pronounced sentence without directions

from the king. Every Mexican month, an assembly of all the judges was held before the monarch, to determine all causes then undecided. If from their intricacy they were not then finished, they were reserved for another more solemn court, held every eighty days, and therefore called *Nappap-sallatolli*, or the *Conference of Eighty*, at which they were finally decided, and in the presence of that whole assembly, punishment was inflicted on the guilty. The king pronounced sentence, by drawing a line with the point of an arrow upon the head of the guilty; and this act was painted on the process.

In the tribunals of the Mexicans, the contending parties pleaded their own causes. In criminal cases, the accuser was required to produce witnesses; but the accused might clear himself from guilt, by his oath or wager of law. Disputes concerning land, were determined by maps, or other authentic records.

XII. The magistrates gave judgment according to the laws, which were duly represented by paintings. Of these, Clavigero says, he has seen many, and has extracted from them, a part of that which we lay before the reader. The legislative power in Tezcuco, was in the king. Among the Mexicans, the first laws were enacted by the nobles; but subsequently, the kings became the legislators of the nation; and while their authority was confined within moderate limits, they were zealous in the observance of the laws, which they, or their ancestors had promulgated. In the last years of the monarchy, the laws were subject to the caprice of the despots.

A traitor was condemned to be torn in pieces; and his relations, privy to the treason, who did not discover it, were deprived of their liberty.

Whoever in war, or in public rejoicings, used

the insignia of the kings of Mexico, of Acolhuacan, or of Tacuba, or those of the Cihuacoatl, was punished with death, and confiscation of goods.

Whoever maltreated an ambassador, minister, or courier, of the king, suffered death.

The punishment of death, was inflicted also on the seditious; on those who removed the boundaries of land; and on judges who gave sentence unjustly, or contrary to law, or made an unfaithful report of any cause to the king, or to a superior magistrate, or who allowed themselves to be corrupted by bribes.

He, who in war committed any hostility upon the enemy without the order of his chief, or attacked before the signal for battle, or abandoned his colours, or violated any proclamation published to the army, was infallibly beheaded.

He who at market altered the measures established by the magistrates, was put to death without delay, in the market place.

A murderer forfeited his own life for his crime, although the murdered was a slave.

He who killed his wife, although he caught her in adultery, suffered death; because, he usurped the authority of the magistrates, whose province it was to take cognizance of misdeeds, and punish evil-doers.

Adultery was generally punished with death:— Such criminals were stoned to death, or their heads crushed between two stones. This severe law was represented in the ancient paintings, preserved in the library of the Jesuits at Mexico, and in the last painting of the collection of Mendoza, and is noted by Gomara, Torquemada, and other authors. But the cohabitation of the husband with an unmarried woman, was not deemed adulterous. In *Ichoatlan*, a woman accused of adultery, was summoned before the judges, and if her crime were

proved, she was torn in pieces, and her limbs divided amongst the witnesses. In *Itztepec*, an adulteress was punished according to the sentence of the magistrates, by her husband, who cut off her nose and ears. In some parts of the empire, death was inflicted on that husband who cohabited with his wife, after she had been convicted of infidelity.

Divorce was permitted, but not encouraged. He who desired to part with his wife, presented himself before the tribunal to justify his intentions. If he showed a legal cause, the judges having exhorted him in vain to concord, suffered him to exercise his pleasure, but gave no formal decree. Parties who were divorced, could never be re-united. The degrees of kindred, within which marriage was admitted, differed little from those prescribed by the Mosaic law, and incest was punished by hanging. Marriage between brother and sister-in-law, as amongst the Hebrews, was lawful;—but there was this great difference in the practice of the two nations; amongst the former, such a marriage could happen only where the husband died without issue, whilst among the Mexicans, it was necessary that the deceased should have left children, of whose education the brother was to take charge, entering into all the rights of a father. In some places distant from the capital, a noble might marry a widowed mother-in-law, if she had not borne children to the deceased; but in the capitals of Mexico and Tezcucó, such marriages were deemed incestuous, and punished with severity.

The priest, who, during the time he was dedicated to the service of the temple, cohabited with a free woman, was expelled the priesthood, and banished.

Incontinence by a male, or female student of the seminaries was severely punished; some authors say, by death. But the laws did not take cogni-

zance of this offence in others. Males or females, who assumed the dress of the other sex, were condemned to be hanged.

Petty larceny was punished, only, by compulsory restoration of the stolen effects. But he who was convicted of grand larceny, became the slave of the injured. If the thing stolen was destroyed, and the robber had not the means of recompense, he was stoned to death. If he had stolen gold or gems, after being conducted through the streets of the city, he was sacrificed at the festival which the goldsmiths held in honour of their god *Xipe*. He who stole a certain number of ears of maize, or pulled up from another's field a certain number of useful trees, became the slave of the owner; but every poor traveller, was permitted to take from the maize, or the fruit-bearing trees, which were planted by the side of the highway, as much as was sufficient to satisfy immediate hunger.

He who robbed in the market, was immediately put to death by the bastinado.

He also was condemned to death, who in the army, robbed another of his arms or badges.

Whoever kidnapped a child, and sold it for a slave, forfeited his own liberty, and his goods, one half of which was appropriated to the support of the child and the other was paid to the purchaser, that he might set it at liberty.

The punishment of servitude and forfeiture of goods, was also inflicted on him who sold the possessions of another, which he held in trust.

Tutors who did not render a just account of the estates of their pupils, were hanged, and the same punishment was inflicted on sons who squandered their patrimony in vices.

For the crime against nature the culprit was hanged; if committed by a priest, he was burned alive. Among all the nations of Anahuac, this



offence was held in abomination, and was punished by all, except the *Panuchese*, with great rigour.

He who practiced sorcery, was sacrificed to the gods. Drunkenness in youth, was a capital offence; young men were put to death by the bastinado in prison, and young women were stoned to death. In men advanced in years, although it was not made capital, it was severely punished. If the culprit were a nobleman, he was degraded, and rendered infamous; if a plebian, he was shaved, and his house razed; it being supposed, that he who could voluntarily bereave himself of his senses, was not worthy of a habitation amongst men. This law did not forbid conviviality at nuptials, or other festivals; nor did it extend to old men of seventy years, who were allowed to drink as much as they pleased.

He who told a lie to the prejudice of another, had a part of his lip cut off, and sometimes his ears.

XIII. The Mexican law recognized three classes of slaves. The first, prisoners of war; the second, those purchased for a valuable consideration; and the third, malefactors, who were deprived of their liberty, in punishment of their crimes.

The prisoners of war, were generally sacrificed to the gods. He who in war took another's prisoner from him, or set him at liberty, was punished with death.

The sale of a slave was not valid, unless in the presence of four witnesses. In general, contracts were witnessed by more, and made with great solemnity.

A slave enjoyed the rights of property, and might hold slaves, independently of his master, the latter having the right only of the personal service of his own slave, under established restrictions.

Nor was slavery hereditary. All persons in Mexico were born free, although their mothers were slaves. If a freeman impregnated another's slave, and she died during pregnancy, he, became the slave of her owner; but if she were happily delivered, the child, as well as the father remained free.

Necessitous parents might sell their children, to relieve their poverty; and a freeman might sell himself for the same purpose; but owners could not sell their slaves without their consent, unless under special circumstances. Runaway, rebellious, or vicious slaves, were reprimanded from time to time by their owners, in presence of witnesses. If they continued disobedient, a wooden collar was put about their necks, and then it was lawful to sell them at market. If, after having been owned by two or three masters, they continued intractable, they might be sold for the sacrifices; but such an event was very rare. In favour of liberty, the royal palace became a sanctuary, to which, if an imprisoned slave escaped, he became free. Nor was it lawful for any one, save the owner or his children, to arrest him in his flight.

Those who became voluntary slaves, were generally gamblers, who sacrificed their freedom, to this tyrannical passion; or those who by laziness, or misfortune were reduced to want; or prostitutes, who needed clothes to appear in public; for women of that class, had commonly no interest in their profession, but the gratification of their passions. The condition of a slave was by no means oppressive. His labour was moderate, and his treatment humane; when his master died, he generally became free. The common price of a slave, was a load of cotton garments. There was a fourth species of slavery, called, *Huehuetatlacolli*; where one or more families, on account of their poverty, bound

themselves to furnish some lord perpetually with a slave. They delivered up one of their sons for this purpose, and after he had served for some years, recalled him, in order that he might marry, or from some other motive, and substituted another in his place. The change was made without offence to the master; on the contrary, he generally gave some consideration for a new slave. In the famine of 1506, many families were subjected to this kind of servitude; but it was abolished by the king of Acolhuacan, Nezahualpilli; and after his example, by Montezuma II. in his dominions.

The Spaniards, who claimed the rights of the ancient Mexican nobles, had, at first, many slaves of these nations; but the catholic kings, abrogated all slavery in Mexico.

Although the laws of the capital were generally received throughout the whole empire, yet they varied in some of the provinces; for as the Mexicans did not oblige the conquered nations to speak the language of their court, neither did they compel them to adopt all their laws. The legislation of Acolhuacan, was most similar to that of Mexico; but it differed in many particulars, and was far more rigorous.

By the laws of Nezahualcojotl, a thief was dragged through the streets and hanged; murderers were beheaded; the agent in pederasty was suffocated in ashes; the patient had his bowels torn out, his abdomen filled with ashes, and afterwards burned; the sower of discord between states, was bound to a tree, and burned alive. A nobleman, who lost his senses from intemperance, was immediately hanged, and his body was cast into the lake; a plebian for the first offence of this kind, was deprived of liberty, and for the second of life; the legislator deeming drunkenness less pardonable, in one whose position in society made him the exem-

plar of others. The same king punished historians, who falsified the annals, with death, and condemned robbers of the fields, to the same punishment, declaring the theft of seven ears of maize sufficient to incur the penalty.

The Tlascalans, adopted the greater portion of the laws of Acolhuacan. But among them, children wanting in respect to parents, were put to death, by order of the senate; and those who occasioned any public misfortune, but did not merit death, were banished.

XIV. Generally speaking, among the nations of Anahuac, murder, theft, lying, adultery, and crimes of incontinence, were rigorously punished, and the general character of their law, was that of extreme severity.

The most ignominious punishment, was that by the gallows; banishment was thought infamous, as it supposed the offender possessed of an infectious vice. The use of the lash, was not authorized by the laws; it was applied only by parents to their children, or masters to their pupils. Prisons were of two kinds; one similar to modern gaols, called *Teilpilojan*, appropriated to insolvent debtors, and to persons guilty of crimes not meriting death; the other called *Quauhcalli*, resembling a cage, was used to confine prisoners destined to be sacrificed, and those guilty of capital offences. Both were well watched and strongly guarded. Prisoners condemned to capital punishment were fed sparingly, that they might taste by anticipation the bitterness of death. Those devoted to sacrifice, on the contrary, were well nourished, that they might be in good flesh. If through the negligence of the guard, a prisoner escaped from the cage, the community of the district, whose duty it was to supply the prisons with guards, was obliged to pay to the

owner of the fugitive, if a female slave, a load of cotton garments, and a shield.

XV. Having presented to the reader the fullest outlines of the civil policy of the Mexicans, which can be obtained from the remaining monuments of their history, we proceed to describe their military institutions, their arms, and their science in war.

The profession of arms was the most honourable in the state. The terrible god of battle, was the most revered of their divinities, and was adored as the chief protector of their nation. No prince could aspire to the crown, who had not given distinguished proofs of courage and military skill, and the splendid post of commander in chief, was invariably the stepping-stone to the throne. The unction, with which the king was anointed, was compounded of the blood of the captives, taken by his own hands. Death, in a well fought field, was the most honourable that could be obtained, and the expiring warrior, exulted in the conviction, that his bravery had procured for him a distinguished place in the memory of his countrymen, and the highest joys of heaven. Children destined to this profession, were bred to it from infancy, and the love of martial fame with which they were thus inspired, enabled the nation to shake off a foreign yoke, and extend their dominion from the banks of their lake to the shores of the opposite seas.

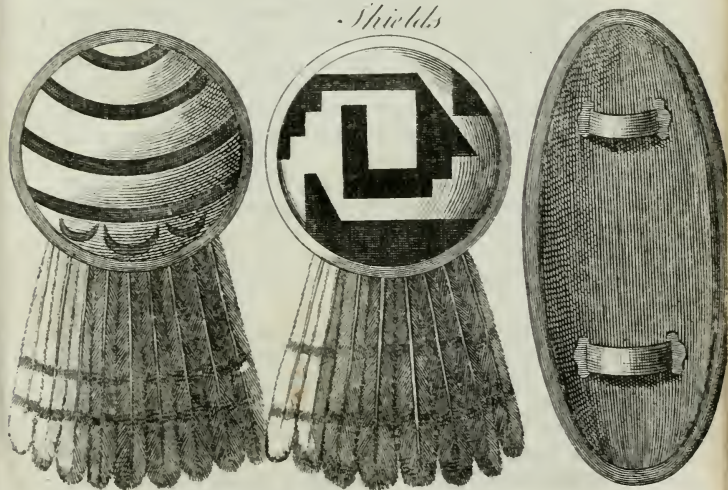
The highest military dignity was that of general, but there were four grades of this rank. The highest was *Tlacochealcattle*, or “*resident of the house of darts*,” and each was distinguished by its peculiar badge. The officers next in rank were captains. To reward military merit, the Mexicans in the establishment of their military orders, resorted to the same means as the monarchs of Europe, and purchased the most devoted zeal of their subjects, by the donation of a cordon, or robe; and in the



*Mexican Armour*



*Shields*



*Sword*





invention of names for their orders, were quite as happy, as the heralds of the eastern hemisphere. The first order was that of princes, the second of eagles, and the third of tigers, all animals of prey. The princes wore their hair tied on the tops of their heads, with a red string, from which hung as many locks of cotton, as they had performed distinguished actions. Several of the Mexican kings gloried in belonging to this order. The historians, have not preserved the decorations of the other orders, but have contented themselves with informing us, that the tigers wore armour spotted like the skins of the animal, whose name they had assumed. The insignia of knighthood, however, was only borne in war; at court, the officers of the army were clothed in garments of mixed colours, called *Tlachquahjo*. The untried soldier was forbidden all ornament of dress; he made his first campaign, clad in the coarse white cloth of the *metl*, which not even princes of the blood royal, could exchange for a more costly habit, until they had given some proofs of their courage. It was the privilege of the military orders to have apartments in the palace, to have golden furniture, the finest cotton garments, and ornamented shoes. The soldier, who by his example encouraged a dispirited army to renew the battle, was rewarded by a particular dress, called *Tlacatziuhqui*.

When the king was in the field, he wore besides the ordinary armour, half boots, formed of thin plates of gold, brachials of the same metal, and bracelets of gems; an emerald hung from his nether lip, and rings of the same stone from his ears; about his neck was a chain of gold and gems, and over his head waved a brilliant plume, but his most characteristic and costly ornament, was a cape of feathers, wrought in mosaic. The Mexicans were

generally attentive, and particularly in war, to distinguish their officers by appropriate badges.

Of defensive arms, shields, called *Chimalli*, were common to all classes. These were commonly round; but sometimes, curved only on the lower edge; usually made of cane interwoven with cotton, and covered with feathers or plates of gold, according to the taste or wealth of the owner; the luxurious, and those of high rank, sometimes used tortoise shells, adorned with precious metals. The ordinary shield was of moderate size, but others were sufficiently large to cover the whole body, yet might be folded so as to be carried under the arm. At the tournament or mock encounter, the combatants wore a small, light, and richly ornamented target. Officers wore cuirasses of cotton, sometimes two fingers thick, which were arrow proof, and on this account were adopted by the Spaniards, who converted the name *Ichahuepilli* into *Escarpil*. Over this they placed another piece of armour, which covered the chest, thighs, and part of the arms. Wealthy nobles wore an upper coat of feathers over a cuirass of gold or silver gilt, which rendered them invulnerable not only by arrows, but by darts or swords. Their heads were cased in helmets, which imitated the heads of animals or serpents, with the mouths open, filled with teeth, that they might inspire terror in the beholder. And all officers wore plumes on the head. The common soldiers went entirely naked; but they counterfeited the dress of their superiors by painting their bodies, like the ancient Picts, of various colours.

The offensive arms of the Mexicans consisted of bows, slings, clubs, spears, pikes, swords, and darts. The bow was of tough wood five feet long, the string of animal sinews or hair of the stag. The arrow was pointed with fish bone, flint, or

itzli. The archers were expert, and the *Te-huacanese*, were famed for their skill in shooting two or three arrows together. Clavigero, avers that it was usual for a number of Mexican archers to assemble together, and throwing an ear of maize into the air, to shoot with such quickness and dexterity, that before it reached the ground it was stripped of every grain. They abstained from the use of poisoned arrows, probably from the desire of taking their enemies alive, that they might sacrifice them in the temples. The *Maquahuitl*, called by the Spaniards *Spada* or sword, was a stick three feet and a half long, and four inches broad, furnished with sharp blades of itzli, about three inches long, and one or two broad, fixed and firmly fastened with gum lac. This was a dangerous weapon, and in the hands of a powerful man, has been known to strike off the head of a horse at a stroke. It was usually secured to the arm by a string lest it should be lost in conflict. The blades however had the great fault of soon becoming blunt. The pike was pointed with flint or copper, and that used by the *Chinantecas*, and *Chiapanese*, was eighteen feet in length. It was employed with extraordinary success by Cortes against the cavalry of his rival Panfilo Narvaez. The dart was a small lance of strong wood, whose point was hardened in the fire, or shod with copper, obsidian, or bone. It sometimes had three points, that it might make a triple wound; and was similar to that called *Hastile Jaculum*, or *Telum Amentatum*, by the Romans. A string was fixed to it, by which it was drawn back after it had been hurled at the foe. This weapon was most dreaded by the Spaniards, for the Indians cast it with unerring aim, and with such force as to pierce through the body of an enemy. The Mexican soldier was ordinarily armed with the sword, the bow, the dart,



and sling; and, probably, sometimes with an axe of copper.

The Mexicans had very distinct, and as heraldic devices were borne by the kings, nobles, and communities, most probably, complex notions of heraldry; and they displayed as much ingenuity in the invention of heraldic signs, as the most learned king at arms or herald of Europe. The standards of the army, more like the *signum* of the Romans than modern colours, were staves eight or ten feet long, on which the armorial ensign of the state, formed of gold, feathers, or other valuable material was suspended. The coat of arms of the Mexican empire, was an eagle pouncing upon a tiger. That of the republic of Tlascala, an eagle with outspread pinions; but each of the petty states composing that republic had its peculiar ensign. Thus, the first had a green bird upon a rock; the second, a heron, also upon a rock; the third, a fierce wolf; and the fourth, a parasol of green feathers. Besides the principal standard of the army, each division of two or three hundred men had its proper ensign, and was distinguished from other divisions by it, as well as by the colour of the feathers worn by its officers. The standard bearer of the army was the general in chief, and of the divisions, the commanding officer; and the standard was so firmly tied to the back of the bearer, that it was almost impossible to capture it, without cutting him to pieces. The Mexicans placed it in the centre of their army. The Tlascalans in peace put it in the van, and in war, in the rear. The music, in which there was more noise than harmony, consisted of drums, horns, and sea-shells.

War was never declared without the sanction of the royal council, and commonly on account of rebellion, or injury done to the subjects of the state. Chiefs of tributary states, who endeavoured to ex-

cite rebellion, were seized and conducted to the capital, and there punished; if the people engaged in insurrection, they were admonished; and if submission and repentance followed, they were pardoned. But if they refused satisfaction or insulted the messengers sent to them, orders were immediately given to the army to march. Sometimes, before a declaration, the kings of Mexico dispatched three several embassies to the offending state; the first to the prince, requiring from him suitable amends within a definite time; the second to the nobles, urging them to persuade their master to submission; and the third to the people, to instruct them in the causes of the pending war. And often, as historians assert, the representation by the missions, of the advantages of peace and the horrors of war, induced an accommodation between the parties. Such an appeal to the people in modern and more civilized states would not be tolerated; yet, were nations consulted instead of their rulers, the scourge of war would be much less frequently felt. The Mexicans sent with their ambassadors, a statue of their god Huitzilopochtli, enjoining the people disposed to hostilities to give it a place among their divinities. The latter, if resolved on war, rejected the strange god; but if inclined to peace, they placed the idol upon a shrine, and acknowledged their submission by a large present of gold, gems, or rich feathers.

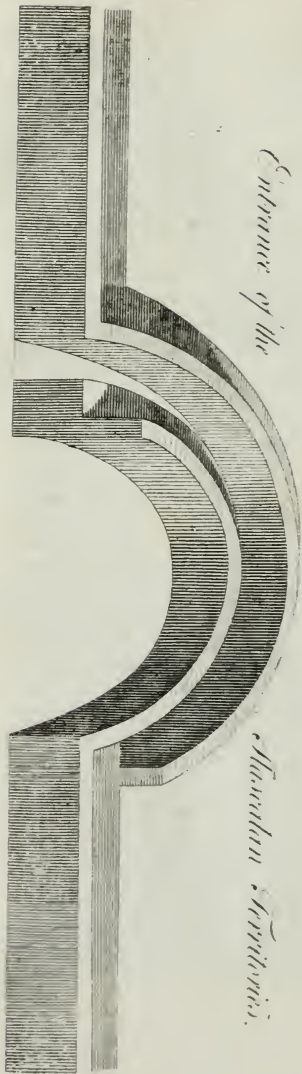
When war was decreed, advice thereof, as was the custom with the ancient Gauls, was immediately sent to the foe; the Mexicans, differing in this respect, widely, from the rude aborigines of North America, deeming it dishonourable to attack the unprepared; and for this purpose, they sent before them several shields and some cotton dresses, the conventional signs of hostility. When one king defied another, he anointed and bound feathers

upon his head, as we have seen in the case of *Itz-coatl* and *Maxtlaton*. When war was declared, spies, called *Quimichtin* or *Sorcerer's*, were dispatched in disguise into the enemies country, to observe their number, and penetrate their plans. This service was rewarded in proportion to its danger. The army marched by companies, and when it was numerous, was reckoned by *xiquipilli*, each of eight thousand men, probably commanded by a *Tlacatecatl*, or other general. A field for the first battle was frequently designated by the parties, and was called *Jaotlalli*, or battle field. They engaged amid the din of musical instruments, loud shouts, and cries, upon the signal given by the general, by beating a small drum which hung at his shoulder. Experience had taught them the benefit of reserves, and a portion of the army was commonly retained for that purpose. The battle usually commenced from a distance with darts and slings, and when their missives were exhausted, the combatants engaged with pikes, clubs, and swords. They were extremely attentive to keep their battalions united firmly together, to defend the standard, and carry off the dead and wounded. For the last duty, a certain number of the troops were specially detailed. Ambuscades and other stratagems were frequently used. The great end in battle was not to kill, but to make captives for sacrifice; and the merit of the soldier was estimated, not by the number of bodies he left on the field, but by the number of prisoners he presented to the general. And to this cause we must assign in a great measure, the preservation of the Spaniards through the dangers they incurred, and particularly on the night recorded as the *noche triste*. If a captive, attempted to escape he was hamstrung. If the standard was taken, or the general slain, the army



*Entrance of the*

*Marathon Fortification.*





was dissolved; nor could human art rally the troops.

Victory was celebrated with great rejoicings, and meritorious soldiers were appropriately rewarded. When the king of Mexico in person made a prisoner, the art of adulation was exhausted on the occasion. All the provinces sent embassies to congratulate him, and to make him presents. His captive was clothed in the finest habits, adorned with jewels, and carried in a litter to the capital; whence the citizens came forth to meet him with music and loud acclamations. On the day assigned for the sacrifice, he was led, decorated with the symbol of the sun, to the altar for common sacrifice. The high priest sprinkled his blood to the four cardinal points of the horizon, and sent a vessel filled with it to the king, who caused it to be sprinkled on all the idols within the inclosure of the greater temple, in gratitude for the victory obtained. The head was suspended in some high and conspicuous place, and the skin, stuffed with cotton, was preserved in the royal palace, a memorial of the monarch's prowess.

When a city was invested, the first object of the besieged, was the removal of the non-combatants, the women, children, aged, and infirm, to a neutral city, or to the fastnesses of the mountains; thereby protecting the defenceless, and diminishing the consumption of provisions.

The nations of Anahuac, possessed no inconsiderable skill in the art of fortification; ramparts, breastworks, pallisades, ditches, and other intrenchments were common. The city of *Quauhquecholan*, was fortified by a strong stone wall, about twenty feet in height, and twelve in thickness. The wall of Tlascala, dividing the eastern boundary of the republic from Mexico, stretched between two mountains, six miles in length, eight feet in

height, independent of the parapet or breastwork, and eighteen in thickness. It was built of stone, firmly cemented. Through this barrier there was one entrance of about eight feet broad, and forty paces long, made between the two extremities of the wall; the one of which encircled the other, forming two semicircles with a common centre.

An ancient fortress stood on the top of the mountain, near the village of *Molcaxac*, surrounded by four walls at some distance from each other, from the base to the summit. In the neighbourhood were many small ramparts of lime and stone, and upon a hill two miles distant, are the remains of an ancient and large city, concerning which we have no memorial. About twenty-five miles N. of Cordova, is the ancient fortress of *Quauhtoch*, (*Guatusco*,) surrounded by high walls of extremely hard stone, the entrance to which was by a flight of narrow steps, the usual passage into all the fortifications. From the ruins of this place, some well finished statues of stone have been taken.

The capital of Mexico, strong by nature, was rendered still more so by art. It could be entered only by the roads formed on the lake, and across these, ditches were cut, and ramparts erected, very susceptible of defence. To protect the city from attacks by water, she had many thousand boats, in which the soldiers frequently exercised themselves by sham naval engagements.

But the most singular fortifications of the city were the temples, the greatest of which resembled a citadel. The wall surrounding it, the arsenals stored with arms, and the peculiar construction of the body of the building assure us, that it was erected as much for political as religious purposes. In this the Mexicans made their last stand, for their gods and their empire, which they defended with bravery that should have made their memories respected.

## CHAPTER VIII.

- I. *Birth and baptism of infants*....II. *Marriages*.  
 ....III. *Funeral ceremonies*....IV. *Education of Youth*....V. *Charge of a Father to his Son*....  
 VI. *Charge of a Mother to her Daughter*....  
 VII. *Public provision for education*....VIII. *Diet of the Mexicans*....IX. *Their garments*....  
 X. *Furniture, &c. for houses*....XI. *Siesta and use of tobacco*....XII. *Mexican agriculture*....  
 XIII. *Horticulture*....XIV. *Domesticated animals*....XV. *Public hunts, modes of catching certain animals*....XVI. *Fisheries*.....XVII. *Commerce*....XVIII. *Money, measures, &c*....  
 XIX. *Regulations of the Mexican markets*....  
 XX. *Preparations of a merchant for travel, road, bridges, and caravansaries*....XXI. *Mexican architecture*....XXII. *Lapidaries and jewellers, potteries, and various manufactures*....XXIII. *Articles sent by Cortes to the Emperor, Charles V.*....XXIV. *Statuary, carving, painting, and music*....XXV. *Amusements*.

Having in the preceding chapters, considered the religious and political institutions of the Mexicans, we shall devote the remainder of the present volume, to an account of the private economy of this interesting people.

In their private as in their public relations, we discover traces of intelligence and cultivation, which scarce exist in their descendants, and will in vain be sought among other indigenes of North America; and which we should not deem credible, were they unsupported by pictorial records, and the attestations of the impartial

and faithful, who witnessed a greater part of what they narrate.

I. As soon as a child was born, the midwife, who seems to have been held in much respect, plunged it into a bath saying, "*Receive this water, for the goddess Chalchiuhcueje, is thy parent; may it free thee from the stain which thou bearest from the womb, purify thy heart, and give thee a good and perfect life.*" Then addressing herself to the goddess, she invoked her protection, and taking up some water in her right hand, she blew upon it and wet the mouth, head, and breast of the child. Again plunging it in the bath, she continued, "*May the invisible God descend on this water, and cleanse thee of every sin and impurity, and protect thee from all evil.*" Turning to the infant she cried, "*Lovely child, the gods Ometeuctli, and Omecihuatl, have created thee in the highest place of heaven, in order to send thee into this world:—But, know, that the life on which thou art entering is full of pain and trouble, and, that thou must gain thy bread with the labour of thy hands. May the deity sustain thee in the many adversities which await thee.*" The ceremony concluded with congratulatory addresses to the parents by their relatives and friends.

On the birth of a son to a king or chief noble, his vassals attended with customary presents. In Guatemala, and the neighbouring provinces, the ceremonies on such occasions were particularly superstitious. A turkey was offered in sacrifice, and the bathing was performed in some fountain or river, accompanied by oblations of copal and parrots. The umbilical cord was cut upon an ear of maize, with a new knife, which was immediately afterwards cast into the stream. The grains of corn were sown and attended with great care, and their product was divided into three parts;—one was

given to the diviner, another reserved to feed the child, and the third was stored, until he was himself old enough to sow it. After these ceremonies the diviners were consulted concerning the fortune of the child; who, having been informed of the day and hour of its birth, considered the sign which ruled the day, and the period of thirteen days, to which it belonged; and if it were born at midnight, two signs concurred, that, of the concluding, and that, of the commencing day.

If the horoscope were evil, and the fifth day after the birth, on which the second bathing was usually performed, were one of the *dies infausti*, the ceremony was postponed until a more favourable occasion. To the second bathing, the more solemn rite, all the relations and friends, among whom were some young lads, were invited; and if the parents were in good circumstances, they gave a splendid entertainment, and made presents of apparel to all the guests. If the father were a warrior, he prepared a small bow, four arrows, and a small habit, resembling his own; if a husbandman or artist, some instrument of his art, proportioned in size to the age of the child; if the child were a girl, a little habit suitable to her sex, and a small spindle, and instrument for weaving. After which, a great number of torches were lighted, and the midwife taking up the child, carried it into the yard of the house, and placed it upon a heap of sword grass, near a bason of water. Then undressing it, she said, "*My child, the gods Ometeuctli and Omecihuatl, lords of heaven, have sent thee to this calamitous world. Receive this water which is to give thee life.*" And after wetting its mouth, head, and breast with forms similar to those of the first bathing, she laved the whole body, and as she rubbed each limb, cried, "*Where art thou ill fortune? In what limb art thou hid?*"



*Go far from this child."* Having spoken thus, she raised the infant on high, to offer it to the gods, praying them to adorn it with every virtue. The first prayer was addressed to the deities above named, the second to the goddess of water, the third to all the gods together, and the fourth to the sun and the earth, "*You sun,*" she said, "*father of all things that live upon the earth, our mother, receive this child, and protect him as your own; and since he is born for war, (if his father belonged to the army,) may he die in defending the honour of the gods; and thus enjoy in heaven, the delights prepared for all who sacrifice their lives to their country.*" She then put in his little hands the instruments of the art he was to exercise, with a prayer addressed to its tutelary god. The military weapons were buried in some field, where, in future, it was imagined, the boy would fight in battle; and the instruments destined for females, were interred in the house itself, under the stone used for grinding maize. On this occasion, if we are to credit Boturini, the ceremony of passing the boy four times through the fire was also observed. Before the instruments were placed in the hands of the child, the midwife requested the young boys who had been invited, to give him a name, which was that suggested by the father. The midwife then clothed the babe, and laid him in the *Cozolli*, or cradle, praying *Joalticiltl*, the goddess of cradles to warm him, and guard him in her bosom, and *Joateuctli*, the god of night to grant him sleep. The name given to boys, was commonly the sign of the day on which they were born, (a rule particularly practised among the Mixtecas,) as *Nahuixochitl* or IV. Flower, *Macuilcoatl* or V. Serpent, *Omecalli* or II. House. Sometimes the name was taken from circumstances attending the birth; thus, one of the four chiefs who governed the re-

public of Tlascala, at the arrival of the Spaniards, received the name of *Citlalpopoca* or smoking-star, because he was born at the time of a comet's appearance in the heavens. The child born on the day of the renewal of the fire, was called *Molpilli*, if a male; if a female, *Xiuhnenetl*; both names having reference to circumstances attending the festival. Men had in general the names of animals; women those of flowers; in giving which, it is probable, regard was paid both to the dream of the parents, and the counsel of the diviners. For the most part but one name was given to boys; a surname was acquired from their actions; as Montezuma I. on account of his bravery, had the agnomen of *Ilhuacamina*, and *Tlacaeli*.

The religious ceremony of bathing being completed, an entertainment was given, the quality and honours of which corresponded with the rank of the giver. At such seasons of rejoicing, a little excess in drinking was permitted, as the disorderliness of drunken persons extended not beyond private houses. The torches were kept burning till they were totally consumed, and particular care was taken to keep up the fire during the four days, which intervened between the first and second bathing; as the parents were persuaded, that an omission of such a nature, would ruin the fortune of the child. These rejoicings were repeated, when the infant was weaned, commonly at three years of age.

II. The marriages of the Mexicans, as all other important events of their lives, were attended by many superstitious ceremonies; yet they were conducted with decency and propriety. An alliance between persons related in the first degree of consanguinity or affinity, was strictly forbidden by the laws of Mexico and Michuacan. But marriages between cousins were permitted. The age of mar-

riage was from twenty to twenty-two years in males, and from sixteen to eighteen in females. When a son attained this age, a suitable wife was selected for him; but before the union was concluded on, the astrologers were consulted; who, having considered the nativities of the youthful pair, pronounced on the happiness or infelicity of the match. If from the combination of signs attending their births, the alliance was deemed unpropitious, another maiden was sought. The young girl was demanded of her parents by women called *Cihuatlanque* or solicitors, who were the most elderly and respectable of the kindred of the youth. These went, the first time at midnight, to the house of the damsel, carried a present to her parents, and demanded her of them in a humble and respectful style. The first demand was invariably refused, however eligible the marriage might appear. After a few days, however, the solicitors repeated their request, with prayers and arguments, extolling the rank and fortune of the youth, and the dowry proposed to the wife, endeavouring also to gain information of the estate she would bring on her part. To this second instance, the parents replied, that it was necessary to consult their relations and connexions, and to discover the inclinations of their daughter, before they gave a final answer. This, they in a few days, by their female messengers, communicated to the parents of the youth.

A favourable reply being obtained, and a day appointed for the nuptials, the parents of the bride, after exhorting her to fidelity and obedience to her husband, and to a course of life that would honour her family, conducted her, attended by troops of friends and musicians, to the house of her father-in-law; if noble, she was carried thither in a litter. The bridegroom and his relatives, received her at

the portal, with four torches, each borne by a woman. At meeting, the affianced parties reciprocally offered incense to each other; and the bridegroom taking the bride by the hand, led her into the hall prepared for the nuptials. Here, they sat down upon a new and curiously wrought mat, spread in the middle of the room, close to a fire kept constantly burning. The priest then tied a point of the *huepilli*, or gown of the bride, with the *tilmatli*, or mantle of the bridegroom, and in this ceremony the form of the matrimonial contract chiefly consisted. The wife now made some turns round the fire, and then returning to her mat, she and the husband offered copal to the gods, and exchanged presents with each other. The repast followed next. The married pair ate upon the mat, giving mouthfuls to each other alternately, and to the guests in their appropriate places. When the latter became exhilarated with wine, which was freely drank on such occasions, they commenced a dance in the yard of the house, while the former remained in the chamber, from which, during four days they did not depart, except at midnight to make the customary offerings at the holy shrines. Indeed, the whole of this period was devoted to prayer and abstinence; and the consummation of the marriage, within it, was held impious, and worthy of divine vengeance. Their beds were mats of rushes, covered by small sheets ornamented with feathers, and a gem of *Chalchihuitl* in the middle of each. At the corners, green canes and spines of the aloe were laid. With the spines the bridegroom and bride drew blood from their tongues and ears, in honour of the gods. The priests adjusted the bed to sanctify the marriage; but we know not the mystery of the canes, the feathers, and the gem. On the fourth night the marriage was consummated; and on the following morning

the parties bathed and arrayed themselves in new dresses, and the guests adorned their heads with white, and their hands and feet with red feathers. The ceremony was concluded by presents of garments to these, proportioned to the circumstances of the new pair; and by carrying to the temple the mats, sheets, canes, and the provision prepared for the idols.

These forms of marriage were not universal throughout the empire. In *Ichcatlan*, whoever was desirous of marrying, presented himself to the priests, by whom he was conducted to the upper area of the temple, where they cut off a part of his hair before the idol; then pointing him out to the people, they cried, "This man wishes to take a wife." He then descended and took the first free woman he met, as she whom heaven had destined for him. But any woman who eschewed this match, avoided the precincts of the temple, that she might not subject herself to the necessity of marrying him. Among the Otomies, it was lawful to use any free woman before marriage. If after the first night the man was dissatisfied with her, he was permitted to divorce her on the next day; but if he did not express discontent, he could not afterwards abandon her. If the contract were ratified, the pair retired to do penance for past offences for twenty or thirty days, during which they not only abstained from pleasures, but mortified themselves by frequent effusions of blood, the pain of which they alleviated by the use of the bath. Among the Miztecas, in addition to the ceremony of tying the married pair together, by the ends of their garments, a part of their hair was cut off, and the husband carried his wife a short time upon his back.

Polygamy was permitted throughout the Mexi-



can empire. The kings and nobles had many wives. But after the conquest, Pope Paul III. and the provincial council of Mexico, ordered in conformity to the sacred canons, and the usage of the church, that all those who were willing to embrace christianity, should retain no other than the wife they had respectively first married.

III. The superstition of the Mexicans was carried to the greatest excess, in their funeral ceremonies, which merit our particular notice, as they convey some idea of their views of a future state, and afford illustrations of their mythology. The obsequies of the dead, were always committed to persons devoted to this service, who were generally far advanced in years.

As soon as any one died, these ministers commenced their office by dressing the body with cut paper, and sprinkling the head with water; after which, they clothed it in a habit suitable to the rank, wealth, and profession of the deceased. If he had been a warrior, the habit was that of *Huitzilopochtli*; if a merchant, of *Jacateuctli*; if an artist, in that of the tutelary god of his art; one who had been drowned, was clad in the robe of *Tlaloc*; one executed for adultery, in that of *Tlazolteotl*; and a drunkard, in that of *Tezcatzoncatl*, the Mexican Bacchus or god of wine. And, as Gomara has well observed, the Mexicans wore more garments after they were dead, than while they were living.

Having thus arrayed the deceased for his journey, the next object of the attendants was to provide him with the means to render it pleasant and facile. He was carefully supplied with a jug of water, and several slips of paper to serve as passports, on various stages of the journey. The first enabled him to walk without danger between the mountains which fight against each other; the second protec-

ted him against the great serpent who waited to obstruct his passage; the third defended him against the crocodile *Xochitonal*; the fourth was a safe passport through the eight deserts; the fifth through the eight hills; and the sixth empowered him to pass unharmed through the wind, which blew so violently as to tear up rocks, and so keenly as to cut like a knife; and they burned all the garments which the deceased had worn during life, his arms, and some household goods, in order that the heat of the fire made therewith, might defend him from the cold of that terrible wind.

At all funerals a *techichi* was slain, that it might accompany and serve its master in the other world. A string was put about its neck the better to enable it to pass the deep river *Chiuhnahuapan* or new waters. It was buried or burned with the corpse. While the superintendants were lighting up the fire in which the body was to be burned, other priests sung continued melancholy measures. When the body was burned, they gathered the ashes in an earthen vessel, amongst which, according to the circumstances of the deceased, they put a gem of more or less value; which was to become his heart in a future life. They buried this vessel in a deep trench, and during fourscore days successively, offered oblations of bread and wine upon it.

Such were the funeral rites of the vulgar; but at the death of kings, and persons of exalted rank, peculiar forms were observed. When the king fell sick, masks were put on the idols of Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca, which were not taken off until he died or recovered. If he died, his death was announced with great solemnity, and all the nobles at court and in the vicinity, were summoned to assist at the funeral. In the mean time the

royal corpse was laid on curiously wrought mats, attended and watched by domestics. Upon the fourth or fifth day, when the nobles had arrived, bringing with them rich dresses, feathers, and slaves, to add to the pomp of the procession, the body was clothed in fifteen or more, very fine habits of cotton, of various colours, ornamented with gold, silver, and gems, an emerald was hung at the under lip, to serve as a future heart, the face was covered with a mask, and over the garments were placed the ensigns of that god in whose temple the ashes of the deceased were to be buried. Some of the hair of the head was then cut off, and with a lock which had been separated in infancy, was preserved in a small box in remembrance of the deceased. Upon this box his effigy of wood or stone was attached. The slave who had been his chaplain, and had the care of his oratory and all that belonged to the private worship of his gods, was sacrificed, that he might perform the same office in the other world.

The funeral procession was followed by all the relatives of the monarch, by his wives, and by the nobility. The nobles carried a standard of paper, and the royal arms and ensigns. The priests kept up a continued song unaccompanied by musical instruments. Upon the arrival of the corpse, at the lower area of the temple, the high-priest, with his servants came to meet it, and without delay placed it upon the funeral pile, prepared of odoriferous wood, strewed with gum copal, and other aromatic substances. During the combustion of the body and regalia, a great number of slaves of the deceased, and those which had been presented by the nobles, some of the deformed men whom the king had collected in his palaces, and some of his wives were sacrificed, that they might also serve him in the future state. The number of the

victims on this occasion amounted sometimes, as several historians affirm, to two hundred. Among the other sacrifices, the techichi was not omitted; the people being firmly persuaded, that without such a guide, it would be impossible to pass some dangerous ways, which led to their future abode.

On the day following, the ashes and teeth which remained entire, and the emerald that hung to the under lip, were carefully sought; and the whole put into a box, with the hair, and deposited in the sepulchre. On the four following days, offerings of meat were made at the tomb; on the fifth, twentieth, fortieth, sixtieth, and eightieth days, additional slaves were immolated. Henceforth no more human victims were slain; but in the four successive years, the anniversary of the funeral was celebrated by sacrifices of rabbits, butterflies, quails, and other birds, and oblations of bread, wine, copal, flowers, and certain small reeds filled with acajetl, an aromatic substance. The bodies of the dead were commonly burned; those only which had been drowned, or had died of dropsy, were buried entire.

As there was no fixed place for burials, some persons directed that their ashes should be interred near some temple or altar, others in the field, and others in sacred places of the mountains. The ashes of the kings and nobles, were deposited in the towers of the teocallis, especially in those of the greater temple. Close to *Teotihuacan*, where there were many temples, there were also innumerable sepulchres. The tombs of those who had been buried entire, were formed of stone and lime, within which, the bodies were placed upon *icpalli*, or low seats, with the instruments of the profession of the deceased. If a sepulchre pertained to a soldier, a shield and sword was laid by him; if to a woman, a spindle, a weaver's shuttle, and a *xicalli*

or gourd. In the tomb of the rich, gold and jewels were placed, with provisions for a long journey. From these dwellings of the dead, the sacrilegious Castilians obtained a large amount of gold; from one, fifteen hundred castellanos, and from another, three thousand.

The caves of the mountains, were the sepulchres of the ancient Chechemecas; but as they grew more civilized, they adopted in this and other rites, the customs of the Acolhuan nation, which were nearly the same with those of the Mexicans.

The Miztecas retained in part, the ancient usage of the Chechemecas, but in others their customs were peculiar. When a prince fell sick, prayers, vows, and sacrifices were offered for his recovery. And his restoration was celebrated with great rejoicings. If he died, the people continued to speak of him as if he were still alive; and conducting one of his slaves to the corpse, dressed him in the habits of his master, put a mask upon his face, and for one whole day, paid him all the honours which they had used to render to the deceased. At midnight, four priests carried the corpse to be buried in a wood, or in some cavern, particularly in that where they believed the gate of paradise to be. At their return, they sacrificed the slave, and stripping him of all the ornaments of his transitory dignity, laid his body in a ditch.

Every year they held a festival in honour of the deceased prince, on which they celebrated his birth, not his death, for of it they never spoke. The Zapotecas, their neighbours, embalmed the body of their principal chieftain. And even from the time of the first Chechemecan kings, aromatic preparations were occasionally used among those nations to preserve dead bodies from speedy corruption.

IV. The education of youth, which is the chief sup-



port of a state, and best unfolds the character of every nation, was carefully conducted by the Mexican parents, and by the priests to whom this office was confided.

“Nothing,” says F. Acosta, “has surprised me more, or appeared more worthy of memory and praise, than the care and method which they observed in the tuition of youth. It would be difficult indeed, to find a nation that has bestowed more attention on a point so important to every state. It is true, they mixed superstition with their precepts; but the zeal they manifested for the instruction of their children upbraids the negligence of our modern fathers of families; and many of the lessons which they taught to their youth might serve as instruction to ours.” The Mexican children, even those of the royal family, were suckled by the mother. If she was deterred from this duty by sickness, she selected a nurse, after strict examination of her morals and health. Children were accustomed from infancy to endure hunger, heat, and cold. When they attained the age of five years, they were consigned to the priests, to be brought up in the seminaries, which was the general practice with the children of nobles, and even with those of the kings themselves; or, if they were educated at home, their parents began at that period to instruct them in the worship of their gods, by teaching them the ritual of prayer. They were led frequently to the temple, that they might become attached to religion. Abhorrence of vice, modesty of behaviour, respect to superiors, and patience of fatigue, were strongly inculcated. They were accustomed to sleep upon a mat; to observe a meagre diet, and to wear no other clothing than decency demanded. When at a proper age, they were instructed in the use of arms, and if their parents belonged to the army,

were led to the wars, that they might practically learn the military art, and grow familiar with danger. The children of husbandmen and artists were taught the profession of their fathers. Girls were instructed in spinning and weaving, and obliged to bathe frequently, that they might be always healthy and cleanly; and the universal maxim was to keep the young of both sexes constantly employed. Nothing was more strongly impressed on youth than the love of truth, and a liar was punished by having his lips pricked with the thorns of the aloe. The son who was quarrelsome or disobedient, was beat with nettles, or received punishment in some other manner, proportioned to his offence.

The system of education may be traced in seven paintings of the collection of Mendoza, in which are expressed the quantity and quality of the food, allowed to children; the employments in which they were occupied, and the punishments by which they were corrected. In one is represented a boy of four years old, employed by his parents in things suitable to his age; another of five years, accompanies his father to market, carrying a small bundle on his back; a girl of the same age is learning to spin; and another boy of six years, is engaged in picking up the maize which had fallen in the market place.

In another painting, we see a father teaching his son of seven years of age to fish; and a mother, her daughter of the same age to spin; some boys of eight years threatened with punishment for non-performance of duty; a lad of nine years, whose father pricks several parts of his body, in order to correct his indocility; and a girl of the same age, whose mother pricks her hands; a lad and a girl whose parents beat them with a rod, because they are disobedient. Another painting represents two lads of eleven years, who having

proven incorrigible by other punishments, are receiving from their fathers, the smoke of *Chilli* or great pepper up their noses; a lad of twelve years, who is punished for his transgressions by being tied upon a dunghill a whole day, and a girl of the same age, who is made to walk during the night, over the house and streets; a lad of thirteen, whose father is teaching him to guide a vessel laden with rushes; and a girl of the same age grinding maize; a youth of fourteen fishing, and a young woman weaving.

In another of these pictures, are seen two youths of fifteen years, the one consigned by the father to a priest, to be instructed in the rites of religion; the other to the *Achcauhitli* or officer of the militia, to be instructed in the art of war. Another, shows the youth of the seminaries, employed by their superiors in sweeping the temple, and carrying branches of trees and herbs to adorn the sanctuaries, wood for the stoves, rushes to make seats, and stone and lime to repair the temple. In this, and in another painting, the different punishments inflicted on novices are also represented. One of the priests pricks a lad with the spines of the aloe for neglect of duty; two priests throw burning fire-brands on the head of another youth, for having been caught in a familiar discourse with a young woman. The body of one is pierced with sharp pine stakes, and the hair of another is burned for disobedience. Lastly, there is exhibited a youth, carrying the baggage of a priest, who attends the army.

Children were bred in such awe of their parents, that even when grown to maturity, and married, they observed an almost slavish respect. The following exhortation of parents to their children, gives us a favourable idea of the Mexican manners and morals.

V. "My son," said the Mexican father, "who art come into the light from the womb of thy mother, like the chicken from the egg, and like it, art preparing to fly through the world, we know not how long heaven will grant us the enjoyment of that precious gem which we possess in thee; but, however short the period, endeavour to live circumspectively, praying God continually to assist thee. He created thee; thou art his property. He is thy father and loves thee still more than I do; repose in him thy thoughts, and day and night direct thy desires to him. Reverence and salute thy elders, and hold no one in contempt. To the poor and distressed be not dumb, but use words of comfort. Honour all persons, particularly thy parents, to whom thou owest obedience, respect, and service. Guard against imitating the example of those wicked sons, who, like brutes deprived of reason, neither reverence their parents, listen to their instruction, nor submit to their correction; because, whoever follows their steps will have an unhappy end, will die in a desperate or sudden manner, or will be killed and devoured by wild beasts. Mock not, my son, the aged or the deformed. Scorn not him whom you see fall into folly or transgression, nor make him reproaches; but restrain thyself, and beware lest thou fall into the same error which offends thee in another. Go not where thou art not called, nor interfere in that which does not concern thee. Endeavour to manifest thy good breeding, in all thy words and actions. In conversation do not lay thy hands upon another, nor speak too much, nor interrupt or disturb another's discourse. If thou hearest any one talking foolishly, and it is not thy business to correct him, keep silence; but if it does concern thee, consider first what thou art to say, and do not speak arrogantly, that thy correction may be well received.

When any one discourses with thee, hear him attentively, and hold thyself in an easy attitude; neither playing with thy feet, nor putting thy mantle to thy mouth, nor spitting too often, nor looking about you, nor rising up frequently if thou art sitting; for such actions are indications of levity and low breeding. When thou art at table do not eat voraciously, nor show thy displeasure if any thing incommodes you. If any one comes unexpectedly to dine with thee, share with him what thou hast; and when any person is entertained by thee do not fix thy looks upon him. In walking, look where thou goest, that thou mayest not run against any one. If thou seest another coming thy way, go a little aside to give him room to pass. Never step before thy elders, unless it be necessary, or that they order thee to do so. When thou sittest at table with them, do not eat or drink before them, but attend to them in a becoming manner, that thou mayest merit their favour. When they give thee any thing, accept it with tokens of gratitude; if the present is great, do not become vain of it. If the gift is small, do not despise it, nor be provoked, nor occasion displeasure to them who favour thee. If thou becomest rich, do not grow insolent nor despise the poor; for those very gods who deny riches to others in order to give to thee, offended by thy pride, will take them from thee again to give to others. Support thyself by thy own labours; for then thy food will be sweeter. I, my son, have supported thee hitherto with my sweat, and have omitted no duty of a father; I have provided thee with every thing necessary, without taking it from others. Do thou so likewise. Never tell a falsehood; because a lie is a heinous sin. When it is necessary to communicate to another what has been imparted to thee, tell the simple truth without any addition. Speak ill of



nobody. Do not take notice of the failings which thou observest in others if thou art not called upon to correct them. Be not a news carrier, nor a sower of discord. When thou bearest any embassy, and he to whom it is borne is enraged, and speaks contemptuously of those who sent thee, do not report the answer; but endeavour to soften him, and dissemble as much as possible, that which thou hast heard, that thou mayest not raise discord, and spread calumny of which thou mayest afterwards repent.

Stay no longer than is necessary in the market place; for in such places there is the greatest danger of contracting vices. When thou art offered employment, imagine that the proposal is made to try thee; then accept it not hastily, although thou knowest thyself more fit than others to exercise it; but excuse thyself until thou art obliged to accept it; thus thou wilt be more esteemed. Be not dissolute, because thou wilt thereby incense the gods, and they will cover thee with infamy. Restrain thyself, my son, as thou art yet young, and wait until the maiden, whom the gods destine for thy wife, arrive at a suitable age; leave that to their care, as they know how to order every thing properly. When the time of thy marriage is come, dare not to make it without the consent of thy parents, otherwise it will have an unhappy issue. Steal not, nor give thyself up to gaming; otherwise thou wilt be a disgrace to thy parents, whom thou ought rather to honour for the education they have given thee. If thou wilt be virtuous, thy example will put the wicked to shame. No more my son; enough has been said in discharge of the duties of a father. With these counsels, I wish to fortify thy mind. Refuse them not, nor act in contradiction to them; for on them thy life, and all thy happiness depend."

VI. The charge of a Mexican mother to her daughter, was not less admirable. "My daughter," said the mother, "born of my substance, brought forth with my pains, and nourished with my milk, I have endeavoured to bring thee up with the greatest care, and thy father has polished thee like an emerald, that thou mayest appear in the eyes of men a jewel of virtue. Strive to be good; for otherwise who will have thee to wife. Life is a thorny path and we must exert all our powers to obtain the favour of the gods. Be orderly, give water to thy husband for his hands, and make bread for thy family. Wherever thou goest, go with modesty and composure, without hurrying thy steps, or laughing with those whom thou meetest, neither fixing thy looks upon them, nor casting thy eyes thoughtlessly around, that thy reputation be not sullied; but give a courteous answer to those who salute thee. Employ thyself diligently in spinning and weaving, in sewing and embroidering; for by these arts thou wilt gain esteem, and the necessary food and clothing. Give not thyself up to sleep, nor seek the shade, but repose thyself in the open air; for indulgence is the friend of idleness and vice. In whatever thou doest, encourage not evil thoughts; regard solely the service of the gods; and the pleasure of thy parents. If thy father or thy mother need thee, do not stay to be called twice, but instantly do their will. Return not insolent answers nor betray a want of compliance; but if thou canst not do what thou art commanded, excuse thyself modestly. If another be called and do not come quickly, come thou; hear what is ordered and do it well. Never offer thyself to do that which thou canst not do. Deceive no person, for the gods see all thy actions. Live in peace with every one, love all sincerely and honestly, that thou mayest be loved in return.

Be not greedy of the goods which thou hast. If thou seest any thing presented to another, give not way to jealousy; for the gods, to whom every good belongs, distribute as they please. If thou wouldst avoid the displeasure of others, make none displeased with thee.

Guard against improper familiarities with men; yield not to the guilty wishes of thy heart; or they will be the reproach of thy family, and will pollute thy mind as mud does water. Keep not company with dissolute, lying, or idle women; for thou wilt be infected by their example. Attend upon thy family, and do not on slight occasions leave thy house, nor be seen wandering through the streets, or in the market place; for in such places thou wilt meet thy ruin. Remember that vice, like a poisonous herb, brings death to those who taste it; and when it once taints the mind, it is difficult to expel it. If in passing through the streets thou meetest with a forward youth who is agreeable to thee, give him no countenance, but dissemble and pass on. If he speak to thee, take no heed of his words; and if he follow thee, turn not thy face to look at him, lest thou inflame his passion. If thou observest these rules he will turn and leave thee in peace.

Enter not, without urgent motive, into another's house, that nothing may be said injurious to thy honour; but if thou goest into the house of thy relations, salute them with respect, and do not remain idle, but immediately take up a spindle to spin, or do any other thing that occurs.

When thou art married, respect thy husband, obey him, and diligently do what he commands thee. Avoid incurring his displeasure, or to show thyself passionate or ill-natured; but receive him fondly to thy arms, even if he be poor and live at thy expense. If thy husband offend thee, conceal

thy displeasure when he commands thee in aught; and afterwards tell him with gentleness, the cause of offence, that he may be won by thy mildness and offend thee no farther. Dishonour him not before others; for thou also wilt be dishonoured. If any one visit him, receive the visit kindly, and show all the civility thou canst. If thy husband is foolish, be thou discreet. If he fail in the management of his property, admonish him of his negligence; but if he be totally incapable, take thou the charge upon thyself, attend carefully to his possessions, and never omit to pay the workmen punctually. Take care not to lose any thing through negligence.

Cherish, my daughter, the counsel which I give thee; for I am already old and have had experience of the world. I am thy mother, and therefore I wish thy felicity. Fix my precepts in thy heart, and thou wilt be happy. If thou neglectest my instructions, and misfortunes befall thee, the fault will be thine, and the evil also. Enough, my child, may the gods prosper thee."

Similar charges adapted to the condition and profession of the children were given, when they assumed the duties and responsibility of their respective states.

VII. Not content with private education, the Mexicans sent their children to public schools, near the temples, where they were instructed during three years in religion and morals. The nobles, and better class of people, placed their offspring in the ecclesiastical seminaries, of which, there were many for both sexes, in the cities of the empire. Those for males were governed by priests devoted to education; those for females were under the direction of aged and respectable matrons. All communication between the sexes was forbidden; and transgressions of that nature were severely

punished. There were distinct seminaries for the nobles and plebians. The former were employed in services immediately about the sanctuary, as in sweeping the upper area of the temple, and preserving the fires before the altar; the latter, in carrying wood for the stoves, and stone and lime for repairing the sacred edifices, and other similar tasks; both were under the direction of superiors, and masters, who instructed them in religion, history, painting, music, and other arts, consistent with their rank and circumstances. Young females swept the lower area of the temple, rose three times in the night to burn copal in the stoves, prepared the meats daily offered to the idols, and covered the statues with the labours of their looms. They were taught the duties of their sex; were habituated to labour, and the practice of domestic economy. They lodged in large halls in the presence of their instructors. And when male or female pupils visited their parents, which was rarely permitted, they were accompanied by their companions and superiors. After listening for a few moments with silence and attention to the instructions and advice which their parents gave them, they returned to the seminary. They were detained in these schools until the time of marriage. When this period arrived, either the young man himself requested leave of the superior to obtain a wife, or, what was more common, his parents demanded him for that purpose. The superior upon the dismissal, at the grand festival of Tezcatlipoca, of all the young men and women who were marriageable, gave them a charge, exhorting them to perseverance in virtue, and the performance of the duties of the new state. Women educated in these seminaries, were particularly sought for wives, not more on account of their virtues, than their skill in the arts pertaining to their sex. The youth, who, when



arrived at the age of twenty-two, did not marry, was esteemed to have devoted himself forever to the service of the temples; and if after such consecration he repented of celibacy, and desired to marry, he became infamous forever, and no woman would accept him. In Tlascala, he who at the age of marriage refused a wife, was shaven; a mark of the highest dishonour in that nation.

VIII. Having thus observed the provisions of the Mexicans for the education of their children, we proceed to detail their means for the sustenance and enjoyment of life. The abject misery of their first years on the Lake of Mexico, habituated them to a strange and disgusting diet; and the species of food which was first eaten from necessity only, became an object of preference when that necessity had ceased.

During that disastrous period, they learned to eat not only the roots of the marsh plants, water serpents, and other reptiles of the lake; but even ants, marsh flies, and the very eggs of these insects. They caught large quantities of these flies, called by them *Acajatl*, fed several kinds of birds upon them, and sold them daily in the market. They were pounded together, and made into little balls, which were prepared for food, by being rolled up in leaves of maize, and boiled in water with mud. Some Europeans who have tasted this food pronounce it not disagreeable. This singular species of caviare, they called *Ahuauhtli*.

They made aliment also of a certain excretion that floated on the lake, which they dried in the sun and used as cheese, which it resembled in smell and taste. This substance was called *Tecuitlall*, or the excrement of stones. But besides these articles, which were consumed chiefly by the poor; the nation possessed in its prosperity a great abundance and variety of food. The first place is

*Western method of making bread*





due to *Tlaolli* or maize, of which they had several species, differing in size, colour, and quality. Of this they made their bread, boiling the grain in water with a little lime, and when soft, rubbing it in their hands to strip off the skin; then pounding it in the *Metlatl* or mortar, and making it into thin flattened cakes, which were baked on heated stones. The finer bread was not thicker than stout paper. It was sometimes prepared with aromatic plants. From maize also they made the gruel *Atolli*, of which they had eighteen sorts, characterized by their several admixtures. It was commonly sweetened with honey, and formed the ordinary breakfast of the people, and was not less healthy than agreeable.

Next to maize, the vegetables in common use were the cacao, the chia, and the French bean. Of the former, several common drinks were made, and among others that called *Chocolatl*. To prepare this, equal quantities of cacao and the seeds of *Pochotl* were ground, with a proportionable quantity of water, in a pot, and macerated with a species of pestal. The liquid matter was poured into a separate vessel. Into the remainder a handful of paste of boiled maize was thrown, and the mixture was also boiled and then blended with the oily liquor, and eaten when it was cool. This is the origin of the chocolate which the cultivated nations of Europe and America, continue to use in immense quantities, prepared according to the tastes of consumers. The Mexicans used in their chocolate the *Tlilxochitl*, or vaniglia, the flower of the *Xochinacaztli*,\* and the fruit of the *Mecaxo-*

\* The tree of the *Xochinacaztli*, has long, straight, narrow leaves, of a dark green colour. Its flower consists of six petals, which are purple within, green without, and pleasingly odorous. From the resemblance of their figure to an ear, they were called by this name among the Mexicans, and by the Spaniards, *orejuela* or little ear. The fruit is angular, and of a blood col-

*chill*,\* and sometimes also honey, as the Europeans put sugar, both to render it more palatable and wholesome.

Of the seed of the chia, a beverage still common in Mexico, was made; and from this seed, mixed with maize, the *chianzotzoolatelli*, an intoxicating liquor, much used by the people in time of war, was obtained. The soldier, who had a small bag of flour of maize and chia, thought himself amply provided. When necessary, he boiled the quantity he desired, mixing a little honey of the maguey with it, and by means of this delicious and nourishing beverage, (as Hernandez calls it,) endured the ardour of the sun, and the fatigues of war.

The Mexicans did not eat so much flesh as the Europeans; nevertheless, at festivals, and daily at the tables of the nobles, different kinds of animal food were served up; such as deer, rabbits, Mexican boars, *Tuze* and *Techichi*, which they fattened as the Europeans do hogs, and other animals of the land, the water, and the air, but the most common were turkeys and quails.

The fruits most used, were the *mamei*, the *tlilzapottl*, the *cochitzapottl*, the *chietzapottl*, the *ananas*, the *cherimoja*, the *ahuacatl*, *annona*, the *pitahaja*, the *capolin* or Mexican cherry, and different species of *tune*, or Indian figs. Notwithstanding this abundant and variety of food, the Mexicans were destitute of milk, and fat, as they had neither cows, sheep, goats, nor domesticated swine.

The usual condiment to their food, besides salt, was the great pepper and tomate, which have become equally common among the Spaniards of that country, and the inhabitants of both Americas.

our, and grows within a pod of six inches in length, and about one thick. It is peculiar to hot countries. The flower was greatly valued, and never wanting in the markets.

\* The *Mecaxochitl*, is a small flexible plant, whose leaves are large and thick, and the fruit resembles long pepper.



They drank several sorts of vinous liquors drawn from the maguey, the palm, and the stems and grain of maize. The last, called *chicha*, was generally used. But the most common, and the best, was that from the maguey, called *octli*, by the natives, and by the Spaniards *pulque*. Of the manner of cultivating this plant and manufacturing the wine, we have already spoken.

IX. The ordinary vestments of the Mexicans were simple, consisting of the *maxtlatl* and *tilmatl*, for the men, and of the *cueitl* and the *huepilli*, for the women. The *maxtlatl* was a large belt or girdle, the ends of which hung down before and behind. The *tilmatl* was a square mantle, about four feet long; the ends were tied upon the breast, or upon one shoulder. The *cueitl* or Mexican gown was also a piece of square cloth, in which the women wrapped themselves from the waist down to the middle of the leg. The *huepilli* was a short under vest, without sleeves.

The dress of the poor, was of the thread of the maguey or of coarse cotton cloth; but the rich wore the finest cotton, embellished with various colours, and figures of animals, or flowers, or woven with feathers, or the fine hair of the rabbit, and adorned with figures of gold and loose locks of cotton hanging about the girdle or *maxtlatl*. The men used two or three mantles, and the women three or four vests, and as many gowns, putting the longest undermost, so that a part of each might be seen. The nobles had winter waistcoats of cotton, interwoven with soft feathers, or the hair of the rabbit. Women of rank, besides the *huepilli*, had an upper vest, something like the surplice or gown of ecclesiastics, but larger, and with longer sleeves.

Both sexes wore sandals of leather, or coarse cloth of the maguey, bound to the foot with strings;

kings and nobles adorned these with gold and jewels.

All the Mexicans wore their hair long, and all were dishonoured by having it shaved or clipped, except the virgins consecrated to the service of the temples. The women wore it loose, the men tied it in different forms, and adorned their heads with plumes on festive occasions and in war.

Like other semi-barbarous people, the simplicity and poverty of the dress of the Mexicans, was accompanied by a vain love of show and finery, in personal decorations. Besides feathers and jewels, used to adorn their clothes, they wore ear-rings, pendants at the under lip and nose, necklaces, bracelets, and anklets. They made their ornaments of crystal, amber, or brilliant stone; but the rich wore pearls, emeralds, amethysts, or other gems, set in gold.

X. But the barrenness of Mexican genius was most evident in the furniture and in the economy of their dwellings. Their beds consisted of one or two coarse mats of rushes, to which the rich added fine palm mats, and sheets of cotton; and the nobles, cloth woven with feathers. The labourer pillowed his head on stone or wood; and the luxuriant supported it by a sack of cotton. The common covering was the *tilmatli*, or mantle; but the higher ranks used counterpanes of cotton and feathers. At their meals they spread a mat upon the ground; but they used napkins and vessels of fine clay. Their seats were wooden stools. Every house was supplied with the *metlatl*, and *comalli*. The former is the stone mortar, in which the women grind their maize and cacao. This instrument is still extremely common in all New Spain, and over the greatest part of America. The Europeans have also adopted it, and in Italy and elsewhere the chocolate makers use it to grind the

cacao. The comalli, as much used as the metlatl, is a round and hollow pan, about one inch deep, and fifteen in diameter.

The drinking vessels, were formed of fruits, similar to gourds, which grow on trees. Some are large and perfectly round, called *Xicalli*;<sup>\*</sup> others smaller, and cylindrical, have the name *Tecomatl*. Both are solid and heavy, their rind is hard, woody, and of a dark green colour, and the seeds are like those of gourds. The xicalli, is about eight inches in diameter; the tecomatl is not so long, and is about four fingers in thickness. Each fruit divided in the middle, made two equal vessels; which, after the seed was taken out, were varnished with a mineral earth, of a pleasing smell, and various colours, particularly of a fine red. At present, they are frequently covered with silver or gold.

The Mexicans knew not the use of wax or oil for light, although they had many kinds of the latter, which they employed in medicine, in painting, and in varnishes; and they extracted wax from the honey comb. In some places they made use of shining beetles or fire flies, for that purpose; but commonly they employed torches of *ocotl*, which although they gave a fine light, and yielded an agreeable odour, smoked, and soiled their habitations with soot. One of the European customs which they chiefly prized, was the use of candles. The men laboured at their different professions,

\* The Spaniards of Mexico, called the Xicalli, Xicara. The Spaniards of Europe adopted this word, to signify the little cup for taking chocolate, and thence came the Italian Chicchera. Bomare mentions the tree Xicalli, under the name of *Calebasier d'Amerique*, and says, that in New Spain it is known under the name of *Choyne*, *Cujete*, and *Huguero*; but this is a mistake. The name *Ihibuero*, (not *Huguero*,) was that which the Indians of Hispaniola gave to this tree; the Spanish conquerors made use of it formerly, but no use was made of it afterwards in New Spain. None of the other trees were known in Mexico.

and the women baked, wove, embroidered, prepared victuals, and cleaned their houses. All daily offered orisons to their gods, and burned copal in their honour, and therefore, no house, however poor the possessor, wanted idols or censers.

The nations of Anahuac, like the ancient shepherds of Europe; kindled their fire by the friction of two pieces of wood. The Mexicans generally used the *Achiote*, or roucou of the French. Boturini affirms, that they struck fire also from flint. They commonly had two meals a day. The breakfast, of *Atolli*, and the dinner taken after mid-day. They ate little, but drank freely, either of the wine of maguey, maize, chia, or of chocolate.

XI. After dinner, the nobles composed themselves to sleep with the smoke of tobacco. This plant was greatly in use among the people. They made various plasters with it, and took it not only by smoking, but also in snuff at the nose. In order to smoke it, they put the leaves with the gum of liquid amber, and other hot, warm, and odorous herbs, into a pipe of wood, reed, or more valuable substance. They received the smoke by sucking the pipe, and closing the nostrils with their fingers, so that it might pass more easily towards the lungs.\*

Who could have predicted that the vice of a barbarous and phlegmatic people, would conquer the

\* *Tobacco*, is a name taken from the Haitian language. The Mexicans had two species of tobacco, very different in the size of the plant and the leaves, the figure of the flower, and the colour of the seed. The smaller, which is the common one, was called *Picietl*, and the larger *Quanjethl*. This last grows as high as a moderate tree. Its flower is not divided into five parts, like that of the *Picietl*, but is cut into six or seven angles. These plants vary very much according to clime, not only in the quality, but also, in the size of the leaves and other circumstances, on which account several authors have multiplied the species.

civilized nations of the whole world, and become the source of the greatest revenues of the kingdoms of Europe; whilst the inventors of the custom should abandon it. Few of the Indians of New Spain now smoke, and none use tobacco in snuff. For soap, the Mexicans, as the inhabitants of the West India islands, used the fruit and root of a tree. The fruit was that of the *copalxocotl*, a tree of moderate size, found in Michuacan, Yucatan, Miztecas, and elsewhere.\* The pulp under the rind of the fruit, which is white, viscous, and very bitter, makes water white, raises a froth, and serves like soap, to wash and clean linen. The root is that of the *amolli*, a small plant, but very common in that country, for which *Saponaria Americana* seems to be the proper name, as it is not very dissimilar to the saponaria of the old country; but the amolli is more used to wash the body now, and more particularly the head, than for clothes.†

XII. Agriculture, the first of the social arts, and the source of all others, was duly honoured and diligently pursued by all the nations of Anahuac. The Toltecans taught it to the Chechemecan hunters. And we have seen that the Mexicans, during the whole of their peregrination from Aztlan, cultivated the earth in all places where they sojourned; and that when subjected by the Colhuans and Tepanecans, and confined to the miserable islands of the lake, they created moveable fields and gardens.

\* Hernandez mentions it under the name of *Copalxocotl*, but says nothing of its detergent quality; Betancourt speaks of it under the name of the soap tree, by which it is known among the Spaniards; and Valmont describes it under the name of *Savonier*, and *Saponaria Americana*. The root of this tree is used instead of soap, but it is not so good as the fruit.

† There is a species of amolli, the root of which dyes hair the colour of gold.



These gifts of necessity, were in after times used chiefly as means of enjoyment, and employed in the cultivation of fruits and flowers, offerings alike acceptable to men and gods. Even under the Spanish regime, daily at sunrise innumerable vessels loaded with various flowers and herbs, come by the canal to the great market place of Mexico. In the largest gardens, there was commonly a small tree and hut, to shelter the cultivator.

When the owner or the *Chinampa*, as he is usually called, wishes to change his situation, either to remove from a disagreeable neighbour, or to approach some member of his own family, he gets into a canoe and tows his farm after him. That part of the lake, says Clavigero, in which those floating gardens are, is a place of infinite recreation, where the senses receive the highest possible gratification.

As soon as the Mexicans had gained by conquest lands for cultivation, they applied themselves with diligence to agriculture. Having neither ploughs, nor oxen, nor other animals proper to be employed in the culture of the earth, they supplied the want of them by labour, and simple instruments. To break the ground, they used the *Coatl*, (or *Coa*,) an instrument of copper, with a wooden handle; but different from a spade or mattock. They employed axes of copper to fell, and shape their timber, putting the axe into an eye of the handle. The negligence of ancient writers on this subject has deprived us of the means of describing other agricultural utensils. Their mode of cultivation displayed not only industry, but also an admirable knowledge of the principles of the art. They irrigated their fields by the rivers and small torrents from the mountains; raising dams to collect the waters, and forming canals to conduct them. Lands which lay on the acclivity of mountains, were not sown

yearly, but allowed to lie fallow until over-run with bushes, which they burned, to repair by their ashes the salt washed away by the rains. They surrounded their fields with stone inclosures or with hedges of the metl or aloe; which they regularly repaired in the month *Panquetzaliztli*. They sowed their maize in the following manner; the labourer made a small hole in the ground with a stick or drill, the point of which was probably hardened by fire; into which he dropped one or two grains, from a basket hanging on his shoulder, and covered them with earth by means of his foot; he then passed forward a certain distance, greater or less, according to the quality of the soil, opened another hole, and thus in a straight line to the end of the field. The plants were thus set equidistant from, and parallel to each other. This method of sowing, is now used by a few of the Indians only. When the corn attained the proper height, the earth was drawn around the foot of the stalks to afford it nourishment, and protect it from the wind.

In the labours of the field the men were assisted by the women. It was the business of the former to dig and hoe the ground, to sow, to heap the earth about the plants, and to gather the harvest; of the latter, to strip off the leaves from the ears; to weed, and to shell it, was the employment of both.

When the fields were sown, small towers of wood, branches, and mats were erected, in which a man, defended from the sun and rain, kept watch and drove away the birds, that came in flocks to consume the young grain, and the precaution has been adopted by the Spaniard.

XIII. The Mexicans were also skilled in horticulture. Their gardens were planted with taste, and stocked with fruit trees, medicinal plants, and

flowers. The last were sought by all, not less on account of the particular pleasure taken in them, than of the custom which prevailed of presenting nosegays to the king, nobles, and ambassadors, and other persons of rank, and of the excessive quantities used in the temples and private oratories. Amongst the ancient gardens, of which an account has been preserved, those of the kings of Mexico and Tezucuco, and of the lords of Iztapalapan and Huaxtepec, are much celebrated. The extent, disposition, and beauty of one of the gardens of Iztapalapan, excited the admiration of the Spanish conquerors. This was laid out in four squares and planted with a variety of ornamental and odoriferous trees; through the squares, alleys were formed by fruit trees and espaliers of flowering shrubs, and aromatic herbs. Several canals from the lake, meandered through it, into one of which, barges could enter. In the centre was a fish pond, whose circumference was sixteen hundred paces, with steps on every side; to whose waters innumerable fowl resorted.

The garden of Huaxtepec was yet more extensive and renowned. Its circumference was six miles, and it was watered by a beautiful river. Innumerable species of trees and plants, indigenous and exotic were reared there, and symmetrically disposed; and at proper distances, pleasure houses were erected. The Spaniards for many years preserved this garden, where they cultivated the medicinal herbs of the climate, for the use of the hospital which they founded. The woods were carefully preserved as magazines of fuel and timber, and of game, for the diversion of the king.\*

\* Cortes in his letter to Charles V. of the 15th of May, 1522, told him that the garden of Huaxtepec was the most extensive, the most beautiful, and most delightful, which had ever been beheld; Bernal Diaz says, that the garden was most won-

Among the plants most cultivated next to maize, were cotton, the cacao, the metl or aloe, the chia, and great pepper. The aloe or maguey alone, yielded almost every thing necessary to the life of the poor. Besides making excellent hedges for their fields, its trunks served for beams for the roofs of their houses, and its leaves instead of tiles. From the latter they also obtained paper, thread, needles, cloth, shoes, stockings, and cordage; the trunk, and thickest part of the leaves, when well baked, made tolerable food; and lastly, it was highly medicinal in several disorders. It was, as we have already observed, much valued, and very profitable to the Spaniards.

XIV. In rearing their indigenous animals the Mexicans were as industrious as in agricultural pursuits. Private persons bred techichis, quadrupeds as we have already mentioned similar to small dogs; turkeys, quails, geese, ducks, and other species of fowl. In the houses of the nobles were bred, fish, deer, rabbits, and a variety of birds; and in the royal palaces, almost all the species of quadrupeds, and winged animals of those countries, with a prodigious number of water animals and reptiles. In this species of magnificence, Montezuma II. probably surpassed all his contemporaries; and perhaps no nation equalled the Mexican in the care of their animals, or had so much knowledge

derful, and truly worthy of a great prince. Hernandez, frequently mentions it in his Natural History, and names several plants which were transplanted there, and amongst others, the balsam tree. Cortes also in his letter to Charles V. of the 30th of October 1520, relates, that having requested Montezuma to cause a villa to be made in Malinaltepec for that emperor: two months were hardly elapsed, when there were erected at that place four good houses; sixty fanega of maize sown, ten of French beans, two thousand feet of ground planted with cacao; and a vast pond made, where five hundred ducks were breeding, and houses erected in which were fifteen hundred turkies.

of their dispositions, of the food proper for each, and of the means necessary for their preservation and increase. Among the animals reared by them, none is more worthy of notice than the *nochiztli*, or Mexican cochineal, which we have already described. This insect, so greatly valued in Europe, on account of its dyes, being not only extremely delicate, but also persecuted by several enemies, demands a great deal more care from the breeders than the silk worm. Rain, cold, and strong winds destroy it; birds, mice, and worms persecute and devour it; hence, it is necessary to keep the rows of opuntia, or nopal, where these insects are bred, always clean; to attend constantly to drive away the birds which are destructive to them, to make nests of hay for them in the leaves of the plant, by the juice of which they are nourished; and when the season of rain approaches, to raise them from the plants together with the leaves, and guard them in houses. Before the females lay their eggs, they cast their skins; to obtain which spoil, the breeders use the tail of the rabbit, brushing most gently with it, that they may not detach the insects from the leaves, or do them any hurt. On every leaf the insect makes three nests, and in each nest lays about fifteen eggs. The cultivators make three gatherings annually; reserving however each time, a certain number for a future generation; but the last gathering is least valued, the insects being smaller, and mixed with shreds of the opuntia. The cochineal is most commonly killed with hot water. On the manner of drying it afterwards, the beauty of the colour chiefly depends. The best is dried in the sun. It is sometimes dried in the *comalli* or pan, in which their bread of maize is baked, at others in the *temazcalli*, a sort of oven.

XV. In the chase, the Mexicans were dexterous.



Using bows, darts, nets, snares, and the *Cerbottane*.\* The cerbottane of the kings and nobles were curiously carved and painted and adorned with gold and silver. Occasionally, there were general chases, either to procure victims for sacrifices, or of a festive nature, appointed by the king. At such times a large wood was fixed upon, and snares and nets set in appropriate places. Some thousand hunters formed a circle round the forest, of six, seven, eight, or more miles; setting fire to the dry grass and herbs, and making a loud noise of drums, horns, and shouts. The alarmed animals fled to the centre. The hunters gradually contracted their circle, until a small space only was left, in which they attacked the game with their arms. Some of the animals were killed, and others taken alive in the snares or by the hands of the pursuers. Such was the quantity and variety of game thus obtained, that the first viceroy of Mexico refusing to credit the report, ordered a general hunt. A great plain in the country of the Otomies, between the villages of Xilotepec and S. Giovanni del Rio, was selected. He, with a great retinue of Spaniards repaired thither, where accommodations were prepared for them in temporary houses. Eleven thousand Otomies formed a circle of more than fifteen miles, and assembled such a multitude of animals, that the astonished governor commanded the greater part of them to be set at liberty; yet the number taken, exceeded six hundred deer and wild goats, an hundred cojotes, and a vast quantity of hares, rabbits, and other quadrupeds. The plain still retains the Spanish name *Cazadero*, or place of the chase, then given to it. Besides the method above described, the hunters had

\* Long tubes, or pipes through which they shot, by blowing with the mouth, little balls at birds.

various devices for taking particular kinds of animals. To catch young apes, they made a small fire in the woods, and put among the burning coal a species of stone, called *Cacalotell*, (raven, or black stone,) which bursts with a loud noise when heated. They covered the fire with earth, and sprinkled around it a little maize. The apes allured by the grain, assembled about it with their young, and while they were peaceably eating, the stone burst; the old ones fled away in terror leaving their cubs, who were seized by the hunters.

The Mexicans pursued the same mode as the Haitians, to take water fowl. The lakes of the Mexican vale, and others, are frequented by a prodigious multitude of ducks, geese, and other aquatic birds. Some empty gourds were thrown on the water, that the bird might be accustomed to see, and approach them, without fear. The bird catcher waded cautiously into the pool, covering his head with a like gourd, drew the fowl under the water, and thus secured as many as he desired.

The hunters took serpents alive, by throwing them into vessels with great dexterity; or by approaching them intrepidly, seizing them with the hands and sewing up their mouths. They still take them in this way, and in the apothecaries shops of the capital, and other cities, may be seen live serpents which have been so caught. They possessed that wonderful skill common to the savage race, of tracing the footsteps of wild beasts, with almost absolute certainty. They tracked them when wounded, by observing attentively the drops of blood which fell upon the leaves, and at all times, by the derangement of the herbs or foliage made in their passage.

XVI. From the situation of their capital, and its vicinity to the lake of Chalco, which abounded with fish, the Mexicans were still more invited to

fishing than to the chase. The instruments commonly used for this purpose were nets, but they likewise employed hooks, harpoons, and spears. The fishers also took crocodiles in two ways. One by tying them by the neck, which, as Hernandez asserts, was very common; but he does not explain the manner in which they performed an act apparently so temerarious. The other, still used, was that which the Egyptians formerly practiced on the crocodiles of the Nile. The fisher presents himself before the crocodile, carrying in his hand a strong stick, well sharpened at both ends, and when the animal opens his mouth to devour him, he thrusts his armed hand into its jaws, which are transfixed by the attempt to close them. The fisher then, waiting until the animal grows feeble from the loss of blood, kills it.

XVII. Fishing, hunting, agriculture, and the arts, supplied the means for several branches of trade. The commerce of the Mexicans originated in the Tezcucan lake. They exchanged the fish caught there, and the mats woven of its rushes for maize, cotton, stones, and wood, which they required for their support, their clothing, and their buildings. Their trade and political power increased in the same ratio, and the former extended to the most distant provinces of the empire. Innumerable merchants travelled from one city to another, and throughout the extensive country of Anahuac a market was daily opened; and on every fifth day, one more considerable, and general, was holden. Cities which were near together, had this market on different days, that they might not prejudice each other; but in the capital it was kept on the days of the House, the Rabbit, the Reed, and the Flint; which, in the first year of the cycle, were the third, the eighth, the thirteenth, and eighteenth of every month.

To convey some idea of those fairs, which have been much celebrated by the historians of Mexico, we describe that held in the capital. Previous to the reign of Axajacatl, it was kept in a space before the royal palace; but after the conquest of Tlatelolco was removed to that quarter. The public place of Tlatelolco was, according to Cortes, twice as large as that of Salamanca, one of the most famous in Spain, and surrounded by porticos for the convenience of the merchants. Each sort of merchandize had its peculiar place, allotted by the judges of commerce. The number of merchants who daily assembled at this mart, exceeded fifty thousand. The articles were so numerous and various, that the Spanish historians, declare their inability to describe them. Clavigero says, that all the productions of Mexico and her dependencies, might be obtained here, as well the raw material, as the manufactured articles. Even slaves, and vessels laden with human ordure for dressing the skins of animals were sold here. Nor was any thing permitted to be sold out of market, save provision. The potters and jewellers of Cholula, the goldsmiths of Azcapozalco, the painters of Tezcucuo, the stone cutters of Tenajocan, the hunters of Xilotepec, the fishers of Cuitlahuac, the fruiterers of the hotter countries, the mat weavers and chair makers of Quauhtitlan, and the florists of Xochimilco, all assembled here to exchange the produce of their labours.

XVIII. It has been said\* that the Mexicans had no conventional representative of value, but carried on their commerce wholly by barter. But this is untrue. They had five kinds of money. The first was a species of cacao, different from that used in their diet, which they counted in

\* Robertson's Am. book 7. sec. 26.

exchange by *Xiquepilli*, or portions of eight thousand. To save the trouble of numbering them, when the merchandize was of great value, they reckoned them by sacks, as dollars now are; every sack containing three *xiquepilli*, or twenty-four thousand nuts. The second representative consisted of small cloths of cotton, called *patolquachtli*, being solely destined for the purchase of articles which were immediately necessary. The third species was gold in dust, contained in goose quills, whose transparency showed the precious metal which filled them, and which in proportion to their size were of greater or less value. The fourth, which almost resembled coined money, was made of pieces of copper, in the form of a T, and was employed in purchases of small value. The fifth, of which Cortes speaks in his last letter to the emperor, consisted of thin pieces of tin.

They sold and exchanged merchandize by number and measure, but we have no evidence that they used weights.\*

XIX. To prevent fraud and disorder, certain commissioners continually traversed the market; and a tribunal of commerce, composed of twelve judges, sat in a house of the square, to decide all disputes between traders, and take cognizance of all trespasses committed there. An excise was paid to the king on all goods brought to the market. A theft seldom happened here, and when detected was punished with great severity. Even a

\* Gomara believed that the Mexicans made no use of scales or weights, because he was ignorant of such a contrivance. But it is very improbable, that a nation so industrious and commercial, should not have known the manner of ascertaining the weight of goods, when among other nations of America, less acute than the Mexican, steelyards were used according to the same author, to weigh gold. Of how many circumstances relative to American antiquity are we still ignorant, owing to the want of proper examination and enquiry.



slight disturbance of the peace was capital. F. Motolinia relates, that a quarrel having arisen between two women in the market of Tezcuco, and one of them having beaten the other with her hands, and occasioned the loss of some blood, to the amazement of the people, who were not accustomed to see such an outrage committed there, she was immediately condemned to death for the offence. The Spaniards who saw those markets highly extolled them, and expressed great admiration of the order maintained among so great a multitude. The markets of Tezcuco, Tlascala, Cholula, Huexotzinco, and other large places, were ordered after the same manner as that of Mexico. That of Tlascala, Cortes affirms, was attended by more than thirty thousand persons. At Tepeyacac, not one of the largest cities, Motolinia says, he has known, twenty-four years after the conquest, when the commerce of those people had greatly declined, that at the market held every five days, there were not less than eight thousand European hens sold; and that as many were sold at the market of Acapitlayocan.

XX. When a young merchant was desirous of taking a long journey, he gave an entertainment to his superiors, who were no longer able, on account of their age, to travel, and also, to his own relations, to whom he communicated his design, and the motive which prompted it. The guests praised his resolution recommended him to tread in the steps of his ancestors, and particularly if it was his first journey, they advised him how to conduct himself. In general, several merchants travelled together for greater safety. Each carried in his hand a smooth black stick, typical of their god Jacateuctli, whose protection was thus secured against the dangers of the journey. At each halting place they bound the sticks together, and wor-

shipped them; and twice or thrice during the night they drew blood from themselves, in honour of that god. During the absence of a merchant from home, his wife or children did not wash their heads, although they bathed, excepting once every eighty days, not only to testify their regret for his absence, but also, by that species of mortification to procure him the protection of their gods. When a merchant died on his journey, advice thereof was immediately sent to the oldest merchants of his native country, who communicated the event to his relations. The latter immediately formed a rude statue of the deceased, in wood, to which they paid all the funeral honours due to his dead body.

For the convenience of travellers, public roads were made, and duly repaired every year after the rainy season; in the mountains, and other uninhabited places, houses were erected for their reception, and bridges and other means were provided for passing the rivers.

The Mexican boats were oblong, and flat bottomed, without keel, masts, or sails, and were propelled by oars. They were of various sizes. The smallest would scarce bear three people, the largest would carry upwards of thirty. Many were made of a single trunk of a tree. The number constantly traversing the Mexican lake exceeded, by the account of ancient historians, fifty thousand. For the passage of rivers, they sometimes used a vessel, called *balsa* by the Spaniards, consisting of a square platform, of about five feet, composed of *otatli*, solid canes, tied firmly upon large, hard, empty gourds. From four to six passengers might be transported by this singular raft, which was impelled by two or more swimmers. It is perfectly safe where the current is equal and smooth, but dangerous in rapid and impetuous rivers. Their bridges were built either of stone,

or wood, but those of stone were rare. The most singular species, was that to which the Spaniards have given the name of *Hamaca*; composed of ropes made of *Liennes*, or parasite plants, more pliant than the willow, yet thicker and stronger, called *Bejucos*, twisted and wove together; the extremities of which, were tied to trees on either side of the river, the tress or net formed by them remaining suspended in the air in the manner of a swing. These bridges, not unlike our chain bridges, are still used. The Spaniards dare not pass them, but the Indians cross them with as much confidence as they do a stone bridge, regardless of the undulatory motion of the *hamaca*, or the depth of the river beneath it.

The maritime commerce of the Mexicans, was very inconsiderable. Their vessels were unfit for navigating the ocean, and those seen coasting on both seas belonged to fishermen. Their greater traffic by water, was carried on in the lake of Mexico. All the stone, and wood for building and for fuel, the fish, the greater part of the maize, the pulse, fruit, and flowers, were brought by water. The commerce of the capital with Tezcuco, Xochimilco, Chalco, Cuitlahuac and other cities on the lake was thus carried by boats, and occasioned that wonderful number of vessels which we have mentioned.

The Mexicans having no beasts of burden, were compelled to transport their merchandize over land by porters or carriers, whom they called *Tlamama* or *Tlameme*. They were reared to this business from infancy, and pursued it during their lives. Their regular load was about sixty pounds, and they walked daily fifteen miles, with this burden; and at this rate, frequently over rocky and steep mountains. And even now, although Mexico abounds in animals of burden, the people are

seen making long journeys with heavy packs upon their backs. They carry these burdens in *petlacalli*, baskets made of cane, and covered with leather, which are light and defend their goods sufficiently from rain or sun. The baskets are still used by the Spaniards, who have corrupted the name into *petacas*.

XXI. With the exception of the savage Otomies and Chechemecas, all the nations of Anahuac were instructed in the architectural arts, and it is not practicable to discover the period when they were ignorant of them. The Toltecks, as we have seen, had long before the arrival of the Azteck tribes, covered the country with cities, magnificent temples, and very extensive and admirably constructed fortifications; and the Aztecks have left memorials of their skill, upon the banks of the river Gila, in Pimeria, and near the city of Zacatecas; and it is not improbable, that many of the monuments which are still visible in the basin of the Mississippi, were the work of their hands.

The miserable state to which the Mexicans had been reduced, before they founded their city in the lake, compelled them to erect their first dwellings of reeds and mud; but, on their acquisition of wealth and power, their taste for splendour and grandeur displayed itself.

As in other countries, the houses of the poor were formed in a temporary manner, and of cheap materials. They were commonly of reeds, unburned brick, or stone cemented with clay, roofed with strong grass, the produce of the hotter climes, or with the leaves of the maguey, placed in the manner of tiles, to which they bear some resemblance in shape and thickness. It was not unusual to support these dwellings against a tree, as well from motives of economy, as from the desire to have the

benefit of its shade. If the tenant were very indigent, one chamber served him for all purposes, sheltering together his family and his domestic animals. But if he were above the pressure of want, his dwelling expanded into several apartments, among which were an oratory, a bath, and a granary.

The dwellings of the noble and the wealthy, were of stone and lime, having two floors, halls, court yards, and many chambers, advantageously disposed. The roofs were flat, and terraced; the walls so white, polished, and splendant, that the Spaniards mistook them for silver. The pavements or floors were of plaister, plain and smooth. Many of these dwellings were crowned with battlements and turrets, and had extensive gardens, arranged with great symmetry. The larger houses of the capital had two entrances; the principal one from the street, and the other from the canal. They were without doors, the laws being deemed a sufficient protection; a reed drawn across the portal was the only barrier against intrusion, and a string of cacao or broken earthenware suspended from it, served the purpose of a bell, to announce the entrance of a visitor. But none presumed to raise this bar, save a relative or friend, without the express permission of the owner.

Clavigero asserts, that their masons understood the construction of the arch, and he refers to the baths, and to the remains of the royal palaces of Tezcuco and other buildings, and also to several paintings, to sustain his position. But from a remark of Torquemada, we should infer that such was not the case. He says, that when the Mexicans beheld the centres taken from the arch, in the first church of Mexico, they were afraid to enter it; and M. de Humboldt, expressly



assures us, that they knew not how to form an arch.\*

There is abundant evidence however, that they delighted in architectural, *rythmic* ornaments, similar to the *Grecques*, and *Arabesques*, known alike to the polished nations of Europe and Asia, and to the ancient Etrurians. These ornaments, together with massive stone columns, without chapter or plinth, are seen in the ruins of the palace of Mitla.† The columns, M. de Humboldt affirms, are the only ones yet found in America; whilst the Abbe Clavigero, would lead us to suppose, that large pillars of a single block, ornamented with bas relief were common.‡

Ornaments, having the resemblance of snakes, were frequently cut about the windows of the houses; and on some dwellings a serpent was represented, in the act of biting his tail, after having twisted his body through all the appertures of the building.

The walls were perpendicular, and were probably raised by aid of the plummet, though it has been supposed, that the Mexican masons elevated the ground with their building, and that until the latter was completed, the walls were invisible. But this clumsy and toilsome expedient, is incompatible with the speed of their labours, and with their acknowledged skill in other matters.

The foundations of the large houses in the capital, were laid on piles of cedar, driven into the marshy ground; and the Spaniards were compelled to pursue the same method. The beams of such houses were of cedar, fir, cypress, pine, or *ojametl*, supported, according to Clavigero, by columns of stone, round or square, and which in the royal

\* Researches, Art. Pyramid of Cholula.

† Ib. Art. Ruins of Miguitlan.

‡ Clavigero, Mex. book 7.—See Note E. Appendix.

palaces were of marble and alabaster; the latter of which, the Spaniards took for jasper. Previous to the reign of Ahuitzotl, the walls were of common stone; but at that period the quarries of *Tetzontli*, were discovered on the banks of the lake, and preference was given to it on account of its porous nature, which renders it very adhesive, and its blood red colour, qualities for which it is still in repute.

The aqueducts of the Mexicans, are perhaps among the most astonishing of their works whether we consider them as great measures of public economy, or as appliances of luxury, to their prince. The salt water of the Tezcucan lake, alike unpleasant and unhealthy, would have driven an ignorant and stupid people from its shores; or if their departure were restrained, they would have procured a more potable beverage, by means of porters, or at most, would have brought the water to their city through an open and unwall'd water-course. The Aztecks were accustomed to hydraulic operations, and the canal at the river Gila, made by the ancestors of the Mexicans, might well have suggested improved means of supplying the city with wholesome water. The aqueducts of Chapoltepec, were two in number, that the city might not be without a supply of water, when it became necessary to cleanse or repair either. They were two miles in length, of stone and mortar, five feet high, and six broad. From the entrance of the city, the water was distributed in smaller channels, for the supply of many fountains, but particularly of those in the temples, and royal palaces. At Tezcatzinco, formerly a palace of pleasure, of the kings of Tezcucoco, the remains of an aqueduct which watered the royal gardens, were visible more than two centuries after the conquest.

The artificers in stone, employed instruments of

flint or obsidian, and probably of hardened copper, with which they performed their greatest and most minute labours. But the results they produced, are not more surprising, than the transport, with the means we knew them to have possessed, of the great masses found in the capitol. The stone on which the Mexican calendar is engraved, and which was disinterred in 1790, from the former area of the great temple, now the Plaza Mayor; was probably placed in some elevated situation. It is near fourteen feet square, and about three feet four inches thick, and weighs twenty-four tons. It must have been brought eight or ten leagues to the city; since there is no quarry of like stone at a shorter distance; and when transported, its volume must have been much greater; for a part, must have been taken away to reduce it to its present form of a regular parallelopipedon. Besides the common stone of the country, marble, jasper, alabaster and itzli, were profusely used. Of the itzli, or volcanic glass, the artists formed beautiful mirrors, which they set in gold; and the extremely sharp razors, with which they edged their swords, and which were used by their barbers. These keen instruments were so easily fabricated, that a skilful workman would finish more than one hundred an hour.

XXII. The Mexican lapidaries and jewellers, possessed skill and taste, which excited the admiration of like artists in Spain. They gave to emeralds, amethysts, cornelians, turquoises, and other gems, what form they chose, and exquisite lustre, and set them in gold in a very fanciful and beautiful manner. Emeralds were so common in Mexico, that no noble was without them, and none was buried without one affixed to his lip. An infinite number was sent to Spain, and other parts of Europe, in the first years after the conquest; and the

value of this stone, which had been before much prized, was greatly reduced. Acosta tells us an anecdote of a Spaniard, who about this time had returned from the Indies, and who showed to an Italian lapidary, an emerald, and asking its value, was informed that it was worth an hundred ducats; he then displayed another, larger, which was rated at three hundred ducats. Intoxicated with his good fortune, he conducted the Italian to his lodgings, and spread before him a casket full, of equal size. "These," said the lapidary, seeing so great a number, "these are well worth a crown a piece." When Cortes first returned to Spain after the conquest, he carried with him, among other inestimable jewels, five emeralds, which, as Gomara, who was then living, assures us, were worth one hundred thousand ducats. The first, was in the form of a rose, the second of a horn, the third a fish, with eyes of gold, the fourth a small bell, with a fine pearl for a clapper, having on the lip, engraved in Spanish, "*Bendito quien te criò*," "*Blessed be he who created thee*;" the fifth, which was the most valuable, and for which the Genoese merchants would have given forty thousand ducats, that they might sell it again to the Grand Signor, was a small cup, with a foot of gold, having four chains of gold, which united in a pearl in the form of a button. The brim of the cup was girt with a gold ring, on which was engraven, "*Inter natos mulierum non surrexit major*." These jewels wrought by the Indians at the order of Cortes, were presented by him to his second wife, who thereby became the envy of all the ladies in Spain. Cortes had also two emerald vases of the same workmanship, valued at three hundred thousand ducats, which he lost by shipwreck in the unfortunate expedition of Charles V. against Algiers. At present there are no such gems wrought, nor is the place whence

they were procured now known. There were, however, some enormous pieces of emerald long retained in the cathedral of Angelopoli, and in the parochial church of Quechola, which the priests kept secured by chains of iron.\*

The Mexican potters, made not only necessary family utensils of clay, but articles of luxury which they embellished with various devices. The most distinguished potters were formerly of Cholula, and their vessels were much prized by the Spaniards; at present the most reputed are of Quauhtitlan.

Their carpenters wrought several kinds of wood, with instruments of copper, of which there are still some remains of tolerable workmanship.

The manufacture of cloths of various kinds was almost universal. In these fabrics were employed cotton, the fur of the rabbit, and hare, the *ixcotl*, or mountain palm, the *Quetzalichtli*, and *Pati*, and other species of the maguey. Many of the cottons were remarkably delicate and fine, and much esteemed in Europe. A few years after the conquest, a sacerdotal habit of the Mexicans was sent to Rome, which, as Boturini affirms, was greatly admired on account of its fineness and beauty. The skill of the weavers must indeed have been considerable, since they had attained the art of weaving in colours, lively representations of animals and flowers. Rich mantles were also made in their looms, of cotton and feathers curiously interwoven; and of a like stuff, they fabricated bed hangings, carpets, gowns, and other articles equally soft and lustrous. They mingled with cotton also, the dyed hair taken from the bellies of hares and rabbits, and having spun it into thread, converted it into costly garments, particularly, winter waistcoats

\* Clavigero, book 7.



for the nobles. From the above named species of the maguey, they obtained a thread equal to that from flax, and from the mountain palm, a coarser fibre, similar to hemp; both were prepared by *retting* in a manner little different from that practised in Europe. The taste and skill of the Mexican artist, will be in a measure understood from the following descriptive list, of the articles sent to Charles V. by Cortes, a short time after his arrival in that country.

XXIII. Two disks, ten palms in diameter, one of gold with the figure of the sun, the other of silver with that of the moon, engraved on them respectively; and both adorned by representations of animals, and other subjects, in bas relief, ingeniously executed: A gold necklace of seven pieces, in which were set one hundred and eighty-three small emeralds, and two hundred and thirty-two gems, like rubies; and pendant from it were twenty-seven small golden bells, and some pearls: Another necklace of four pieces of gold, set with one hundred and two rubies, one hundred and seventy-two emeralds, and ten fine pearls, with twenty-six bells of gold: A helmet of wood overlaid with gold, and adorned with gems, from which hung twenty-five golden bells; the whole surmounted for a crest, with a bird, having eyes, beak, and feet, of gold: A bracelet of gold: A sceptre with rings of gold at the extremities, set with pearls: Four tridents, ornamented with feathers of various colours, with pearl points, bound with golden thread: Several shoes of deer skin, sewed with gold thread, the soles of blue and white itzli, extremely thin: A shield of wood and leather, with small bells hanging from it, having in the centre a gold plate, on which was engraved a portrait of the god of war, between the heads of a lion, a tiger, an eagle, and an owl: Several dressed skins of quadrupeds and

birds, with the hair and plumage: Twenty-four curious shields of gold, feathers, and small pearls, and four others of feathers and silver only: Four fishes, two ducks, and some other birds of cast gold: Two sea shells imitated in gold, and a large crocodile, girt with golden threads; a large mirror, and many smaller ones, adorned with gold: Several mitres and crowns, of feathers and gold, decked with pearls and gems: Some large plumes of beautiful feathers of various colours, fretted with gold and small pearls: Rich fans of feathers, and of gold, and feathers intermixed, of various sizes and fanciful forms: Various mantles of cotton, some altogether white, others chequered of many colours, on the outside rough, like a shaggy cloth, and without nap, and colourless: Many vests, napkins, bed covers, tapestries, and carpets of cotton.

These various articles were, according to Gomara, more valuable for their workmanship than their material. The colours of the cotton were very fine, and those of the feathers natural; and the works of cast metal astonished the Spanish goldsmiths.

XXIV. The culture of religion has in most countries, been accompanied by the growth of the arts of painting and sculpture; men being at all times prone to represent, in a tangible and visible form, their conceptions of the deities they worship. The prohibition of the divine law, excluded these arts of simulation from the Jewish temple and altars, but the jealousy of the Hebrew theocracy in this respect, has not been imitated by other religionists, save the Mahometans and the reformed christians. But if veneration for supernatural power gave birth to, or promoted these arts, it is probable that the superstition which thence grew up, also circumscribed their progress—that the first imperfect models acquired a sacred character, from

which the priests forbade any deviation, until the increase of civilization and taste throughout society, compelled them to admit genius to the altar. To this cause we may ascribe, the preservation of rude and imperfect forms of statuary among the Egyptians, the Hindoos, and other nations of the East, and the Mexicans, long after they had acquired science, and art to mould more true, and more graceful imitations of nature.

From whatever cause the taste may have been derived, the Mexicans delighted in the imitative arts, and are reported to have been more successful in sculpture, casting in metals and in mosaic work, than in painting. They carved in stone metal and wood, and gave acuteness and polish to their work, truly astonishing, from the imperfect tools they possessed. The Toltecks, long before the arrival of the Mexicans, had executed some very extraordinary works of sculpture, such as the gigantic statue of Tlaloc, placed upon the mountain of the same name, and the great images erected to the sun and moon, in the celebrated temples of Teotihuacan. These were preserved by the nations of Aztec race for several centuries, but, they perished by the intemperate zeal of the christians, in a very few years after the conquest. The Mexicans had artists of this kind among them when they departed from Aztlan, since, they formed a statue of Huitzilopochtli during their peregrination. Clavigero assures us, that they could express in their statues, all the postures which the human body can assume. that they preserved the proportions exactly, and could, when necessary, execute the most delicate and minute strokes—that, they not only made entire statues, but cut from stone, figures in bas relief; and he refers to a work of this species, representing Montezuma and one of his sons, recorded with praises by Acosta. Modern

discoveries have confirmed this statement by testimonials, which are incontrovertible.

The statue of the Aztec priestess, in the cabinet of M. Dupe, of Mexico; the cylindrical stone formerly used for the gladiatorial sacrifices, ten feet broad, and eight feet three inches high, on which was twenty times represented a warrior, with his right hand on the helmet of a man, who is offering him flowers:—The bas relief, found at Oaxaca, exhibiting a warrior returning from combat, decked with the spoil of his enemies, and having two slaves at his feet, all which have been drawn and described by M. de Humboldt:—The colossal statue of the goddess *Teoyaomiqui*, and the calendar monument described by M. Gama,—are all evidences of skill, whilst the bas relief of Oaxaca, in the country of the Zapotecs, where also is the palace of Mitla, with its elegant *grecques* and labyrinths, bear witness, that when not confined by superstition or established usage to particular forms, the Mexican artists were not destitute of taste.

The number of statues was immensely great, since they were placed not only in the temples, but in the dwellings of almost every individual. We have seen heads and busts of a few inches in length, formed of terra-cotta, said to have been dug from ancient Mexican tombs, which were not without taste; but we cannot vouch that they were not the fabric of modern times, and made with the light which the Mexican has derived from his conqueror. The furious zeal of Zummaraga and his assistant missionaries, was specially directed, and most successfully exercised upon the Mexican idols, and of the thousand which were scattered over the country scarce one remains. The foundation of the first

church built in Mexico, was laid with idols; and many were buried under the ruins of the city, or used to fill the canals; and it is not impossible that a like chance which disinterred the statue of *Teoyaomiqui*, may yet give to the world, other precious monuments of Aztec antiquity.

Castings in metal were more esteemed, than the labours of the chisel, both on account of the greater value of the material, and the excellence of art displayed in them. The skill and taste employed on these subjects, were much admired by European artists; and not without reason. if credit be given to the description, by some historians. of the imitations of nature, made by the Mexicans in gold and silver. Clavigero speaks of a fish, whose scales were alternately of silver and gold; of a parrot, with a moveable head, tongue, and wings; and an ape with moveable head and feet, having a spindle in his hand in the attitude of spinning. The jewellers as we have seen, in the presents from Cortes to the emperor, set gems in gold and silver, and many of their productions were prized even by the Spanish soldiers, burning with the unhallowed thirst for gold, more for the skill displayed in the work, than for the value of the material. This art formerly practised by the Toltecs, the invention of which, they ascribed to Quetzalcoatl, has been entirely lost, by the debasement of the Indians, and the indolence of the Spaniards. If any remains of this kind exist, they must be sought in the cabinets of the curious in Europe; none are discoverable in the country in which they were made.

But the feather work in mosaic, of which we have frequently spoken, was yet more highly valued. For this fabric, the various species of birds, of splendid plumage, with which the country abounds, were carefully raised, in the palace of the



king and the cot of the peasant, and their feathers formed a considerable article of commerce. From these, the *Huitzitzilin* or humming bird, included, were obtained hues, which art can never equal. Several artists engaged together upon a subject, each charging himself with the execution of a part, at which he laboured with great patience and assiduity; frequently spending a whole day in adjusting a feather. When each had performed his task, they assembled to form the entire image. The manner of work, was to seize each feather with small pincers, and to cement it on a cloth with prepared gum, and then to press the whole carefully, until it attained a surface so equal and smooth, that it appeared to have been made with a pencil. Acosta assures us, that some Indians could copy whatever was painted, so perfectly, with plumage, that they rivalled the best painters in Spain.\* Several works of this kind are preserved in the museums of Europe, and many in Mexico, but few are supposed to belong to the sixteenth century. The last proficient of this art, died at Pascuaro, the capital of Michuacan, where it had most flourished, at the close of the last age. Very curious mosaic works, were also made from broken shells; and this is still practised in Guatemala. Inferior, but still beautiful pictures were formed with leaves and flowers, upon mats, which were eagerly sought by the Spaniards; and in modern times the Indians have substituted silk for these materials.

\* Gio Lorenzo d'Anagnia, a learned Italian of the sixteenth century, treating of those images of the Mexicans, observes, "Amongst others, I was greatly astonished at a San Girolamo, with a crucifix and a lion, which La Sig. Diana Loffreda showed me; discovering so much beauty from the liveliness of the natural colours, so well, and so justly placed, that I imagined I could never see an equal to it, far less a better, among the ancient, or even among the most eminent modern painters."

\* Nat. and Moral Hist. lib. iv. c. 37

The subject of Mexican painting, is one of the deepest interest, since it involves the complex and extraordinary written language of the nation, if such expression may be allowed in relation to the pictorial writing, in which the Mexicans preserved their history and their science, and by which they communicated knowledge with a freedom, second only to that given by the *phonetic* hieroglyphic, or the representative of sounds. We shall not now treat this subject in its extent, having devoted the next chapter to the language and writings of the Aztec race; but shall confine ourselves for the present, to some remarks on the skill and taste of the Mexican artists, in representing natural objects. These, if we credit the, perhaps, too partial Clavigero, were highly respectable. The palaces of Mexico and Tezcucó, abounded not only with the portraits of the gods, but with vivid representations of heroes, animals, and plants. But we incline to believe, that the painters were wholly unacquainted with perspective, or the effects of light and shade, and that the extent of their ability, enabled them only to give tolerable correct outlines, of the objects they would represent. This was done with great facility, as in the case of the artists who attended the messengers sent by Montezuma to Cortes, and who carried to the king, intelligible pictures of the most remarkable things they beheld. Bernal Diaz however, relates a very singular circumstance of the skill of these painters in taking likenesses. That of Cortes, which they exhibited at court, was so similar to *Quintalbor*, one of the chief nobles, that the resemblance induced the king to join him in the next embassy. When the Mexican appeared at camp, his likeness to Cortes in features, air, and person was so great, that the Spaniards, in speaking of them, used to say, this, and the other Cortes.

The Mexicans painted on cloth made of the

thread of the maguey, or of the palm *Icxtl*, on dressed skins, or on paper, fabricated also from the maguey or other species of the aloe. The latter, was commonly of the thickness of pasteboard, but softer, smoother, and easily to be written on, and was prepared in very long sheets, which might be rolled up or folded. The colours employed were beautifully bright, and very durable, since in some paintings yet preserved, their brilliancy is striking. They were extracted from vegetables, animals, and minerals. White was obtained from calcined stones; black, from ochre and soot; blue, from flowers and the indigo plant; red, from the roucou; and carmine, from the cochineal. The painters understood the use of mordants, to render colours bright and permanent, and to adapt them to the brush they added glutinous juices and gums, or the fine oil of Chian.

The Mexicans had advanced even less in the art of music, than in that of painting. They had no stringed instruments, nor any other than horns, sea shells, flutes, or pipes, the *Huehuatl*, a species of tamborine, and the *Teponaztli*, or horizontal drum. The sound of the last, when small, was lugubrious, and when large, might be heard several miles. Yet to these instruments they sang their hymns and songs, and measured their steps in the dance.

XXV. The amusement of the people, appears to have been an important object of state policy. The duties of religious worship were rendered more agreeable by music and dancing, military games were established, and others, chiefly of an active character, were carefully encouraged.

The dances, in which all classes were exercised from childhood, under the direction of the priests, were most graceful. They were grave or gay according to the occasion; were sometimes performed by the sexes separately, but at others, they com-

mingled. The nobles arrayed themselves in their most splendid robes, and richest ornaments, with a light shield, covered with feathers, in one hand, and in the other an *Ajacaxtli*, or hollow instrument, containing small stones, which they shook in accompaniment to the music; and the people disguised themselves under various figures of animals, in dresses made of paper, of feathers, or of skins.

Their dances were either private or public. The former were performed on some occasion of domestic festivity, or peculiar devotion, in private dwellings. The latter, of various kinds, were exhibited in the area of the temple, and some hundreds frequently joined in them. The ordinary form consisted of several concentric circles. Next to the music which was placed in the centre, the nobles of the highest order were arranged, and the exterior circles consisted of performers, classed according to their rank and age. The figure when completed, had the form of a wheel with many radii. The dancers described a circle, but none departed from the line in which he was stationed, so that, as the ground to be passed over by each, increased with his distance from the centre, much care and practice was necessary to the adjustment of his motion, and the consequent preservation of the figure. Those near the centre, grave seniors, and potent lords, moved with becoming moderation and dignity, whilst the plebians and youth upon the periphery, were driven with bewildering velocity.

These ballets were always accompanied by songs, two persons singing a verse, to which the others responded in chorus. The chaunt commenced in a low tone, and slow measure, but grew loud and vivacious with the increasing swiftness of the dance. In the space between the several circles, buffoons were occasionally admitted, who, amused

the dancers by their grotesque apparel and merry antics. When one set of performers was wearied, another took its place, and the dance was thus sustained for many hours.

Beside the public dance we have described, there were characteristic ones appropriated to the celebration of some religious mystery, to some event of history, of war, of the chase, or of agriculture. In all, the kings, nobles, and priests, were performers, distinct places being assigned them, that their dignity might not be compromised.

One of the dances still preserved by the people of Yucatan, was extremely curious. From the top of a perpendicular post, fifteen or twenty feet high, a number of cords, commonly twenty, of different colours, were suspended, and held respectively by the performers. In the course of the dance, these were crossed with great dexterity, until a beautiful net work, admirably checkered, was woven around the post. And when the cords became so short, that they could no longer be conveniently holden, the dancers unwound them with equal grace and art. There was also a dance among the Mexicans, called *Tocotin*, so solemn, decent, and graceful, that it has been adopted by the conquerors, in the celebration of some sacred festivals.

Public games politically framed, to form an active and warlike people, were periodically exhibited. These consisted principally of the foot race, and mock combats, in which the soldiers acquired that presence of mind, and dexterous use of their weapons which rendered them superior in battle to the surrounding nations, and enabled them to extend so widely the Mexican dominion. Among other games and sports, less useful perhaps, but much enjoyed by the populace, we may notice that of the flyers, certain games at ball, and various gymnas-



tic exhibitions, in which extraordinary skill and strength were displayed.

The game of the flyers was the most singular and most celebrated. A lofty tree, stripped of its branches and bark, was planted in the centre of some large square. The top was cased in a wooden cylinder; from which hung four strong ropes supporting a square frame. In the space between the cylinders and the frame, were four other ropes, twisted as many times round the tree as there were revolutions to be made by the flyers. These ropes were drawn through four holes, in the middle of the planks of the frame. The four principal performers, disguised as eagles, herons, and other birds, ascended the tree with great agility, by means of a cord, which was laced about it from the ground to the frame; from the frame they mounted successively upon the cylinder, and after having danced there for a short time, tied themselves to the ropes which were drawn through the holes of the frame, and launching with a spring from it, began their flight with their wings expanded. The action of their bodies put the frame and cylinder in motion; the former by its revolution gradually untwisted the cords, by which the flyers were suspended; so that, as the ropes lengthened, they made greater circles in their flight. Whilst the four were flying, a fifth danced upon the cylinder, beating a small drum, or waving a flag, without the least apprehension of danger. Others who were upon the frame, there being commonly ten or twelve engaged in this sport at a time, when the flyers were in their last revolution, precipitated themselves by the same ropes, in order to reach the ground at the same time, frequently passing from one rope to the other in their descent.

The most essential point of this performance, consisted in proportioning the height of the tree to





the length of the ropes, so that the flyers might reach the ground with thirteen revolutions; thus representing their cycle of fifty-two years, composed in the manner we have already described. This celebrated diversion has been preserved, but no attention is paid to the number of the revolutions, or that of the flyers; as the frame is commonly sexagonal, or octagonal, and the flyers six or eight in number.

A favourite game similar to foot ball was usually played in a species of alley specially prepared for it, called *Tlacho*, and is described by Torquemada, as a plain square space of ground, about eighteen perches in length, and proportionably broad, enclosed within four walls, thicker below than above, and the side walls higher than the others, well whitened and polished. The walls were crowned with battlements, and on the lower one stood two idols, placed there at midnight, with many superstitious ceremonies; and before the court, was used, it was consecrated by the priests, with other forms of the same nature.

Clavigero describes this ball alley differently, but says, it is probable, that there were varieties of the same game. The ball used was of elastic gum, three or four inches in diameter, which, although heavier, rebounds more than those made of air. They played in parties, two against two, or three against three. The players were entirely naked, except the *maxtlatl*, or large girdle. It was an essential condition, not to touch the ball, unless with the joint of the thigh, or the arm, or elbow, and whoever struck it with his hand, or foot, or other part of the body, lost one of the game. The player who struck the ball to the opposite wall, gained a point.

The stakes were according to the condition of the players. The poor played for ears of maize,

and if they had nothing else, they risked their liberty; others staked dresses of cotton; and the wealthy played for articles of gold, precious feathers, and jewels. There were in the space between the players, two large stones, resembling in figure, our mill stones, each of which, had a hole in the middle, a little larger than the ball. Whoever struck the ball through this hole, a feat extremely uncommon, became not only victor in the game, but according to the established law, the proprietor of the dresses of all who were present, and acquired the highest renown.

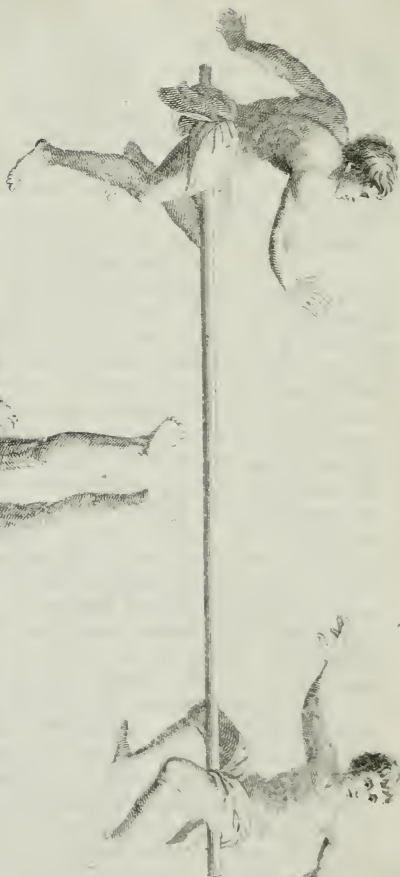
This game was in high estimation, and was much practised, as may be inferred from the surprising number of balls which the cities of *Tochtepec*, *Otatitlan*, and other places, paid in tribute to the crown of Mexico, which was not less than sixteen thousand. The kings themselves challenged each other at this game; as Montezuma II. did Nezahualpilli. It has grown into disuse among the nations of the Mexican empire; but is still preserved by the *Najarites*, the *Opates*, the *Taraumares*, and other nations of the North. The Mexicans took great delight also in another game, similar to ours with dice, which some writers have called *patolli*. They described upon a fine mat, made of the palm tree, a square, within which they drew two diagonal, and two cross lines. Instead of dice, they threw large beans, marked with small points. According to the points which turned up, they put down, or took up certain small stones, from the junction of the lines, and whoever had three of these first in a series, was victor.

Bernal Diaz mentions another game, called *Totoloque*, at which Montezuma amused himself with Cortes, during his imprisonment. They threw, he says, from a distance, little balls of gold, at pieces of the same metal, which were placed as marks,





*Mexican Frods of Juixty*



and whoever made the first five hits, won the jewels for which they played.

Some of the gymnastic games of the Mexicans, are certainly not surpassed by any of the herculean feats exhibited by modern posture masters. In one a man laid himself upon his back on the ground, and raising his feet, took a beam upon them, about eight feet in length. He tossed this into the air, and received it as it fell, in rapid succession. Taking it afterwards between his feet, he turned it rapidly round, with two men sitting astride upon it, one at each extremity. This feat was performed at Rome before Pope Clement VII. and many Roman princes, by two Mexicans, sent over by Cortes, to the great satisfaction of the spectators. In a second, a man began a dance; another placed upright on his shoulders, accompanied him in his movements; while a third standing upon the head of the second, also danced and displayed many fantastic tricks. In a third, a forked beam was placed upon the shoulders of two dancers, whilst another performed many rapid and extraordinary gyrations upon its apex. The first Spaniards who witnessed these exhibitions were so much astonished, that they ascribed them to supernatural power, forgetting to make due allowance for the progress of human genius when assisted by application and labour.

Having omitted the subject in a more appropriate place, we must offer a few remarks, here, on the proficiency of the Mexicans in the science of physic, and the art of surgery. Clavigero claims high consideration for their physicians, and reproaches preceding historians for having neglected to notice them. Notwithstanding the division of labour which was observable in other professions, the Mexican physician, performed the duties of surgeon and apothecary; and if not equal in skill and know-

ledge, to medical men of modern times and civilized countries, his practice was not less mysterious. It would seem that, a regular treatment was established; that the diagnosis of the diseases of the climate, was duly taught by the father to the son, with the knowledge of many subjects, in the vegetable kingdom, promotive of a cure. Their research in natural history was very considerable, since from them Dr. Hernandez derived his knowledge of twelve hundred plants, with their proper Mexican names; of more than two hundred species of birds, and of a large number of quadrupeds, reptiles, fishes, insects, and minerals. "Europe," says Clavigero, "is indebted to the physicians of Mexico, for tobacco, American balsam, gum copal, liquid amber, sarsaparilla, tecamaca, jalap, *barley*, the purgative pine seeds, and other simples, much used in medicine; but the number of which she has been denied the benefit, by the ignorance and negligence of the Spaniards, is infinite."

The Mexicans employed various tonics, emetics, purgatives, diuretics, emulsions, and unctions; which he enumerates:—they were skilful in phlebotomy, and other surgical operations, especially in the cure of flesh wounds; and understood the value of the bath, both cold, tepid, and in vapour, and frequently prescribed it to their patients. The last possesses an interest independent of its medical application, since the chamber in which it was administered was specially constructed, and consisted of a *vault*, of unburned bricks, like an oven, about eight feet in diameter, and six in height, whose entrance was sufficiently large to admit a man to creep through. A furnace was annexed, with its mouth outward, and a vent at the top; it was separated from the chamber by a large stone, by means of which, when heated, the vapour was

generated by casting water upon it. The patient stretched himself upon the floor of this vault, and closing every aperture, availed himself of the bath. If this structure were common, as Clavigero assures us, the Mexicans must have been competent to make every species of the arch, and would have employed it extensively in their buildings.



## APPENDIX.

### NOTE A.

Throughout America, north of the present Spanish boundary, monuments, having in some respects a striking resemblance to the teocallis and fortresses of Mexico, abound; and lead the mind irresistably to the conclusion, that a very numerous race of men, far more civilized than that found by the Europeans, once possessed the country between the lakes and the gulph of Mexico, and covered the great vale of the Mississippi. These monuments consist of simple mounds, which were depositaries for the dead, and are filled with their bones; of large quadrangular piles of earth, which, like the pyramids of Teotihuacan, were bases of temples; and of large walled areas, which probably contained towns of large size. There are points of resemblance between these and the Mexican works, which sustain the inference that both were the labours of the same hands. Yet there is so much difference between them, that it may be, perhaps, correctly contended, that, if the artificers of both had the same origin, they had not the same era, but were very remotely connected. The arts of the Mexicans, appear to have been much more perfected, than those known to the former inhabitants of our Western country. The plan of my work does not permit me to enter into the examination and discussion of these points at present; but they will be duly considered hereafter. It may be proper, however, to advert here, in general terms, to the extent and nature of the very interesting remains yet visible in the United States and its territories.

These works have been observed from the margin of the lakes, in New York, in Western Pennsylvania, along both banks of the Ohio, the Mississippi, and their greater tributaries, and in the far far West, between the Mississippi river and the rocky mountains. On the east of the Alleghany, they are noticed first on the south side of Lake Ontario, near Black river, and last at Oxford, on the Chenango river. Proceeding westward towards Lake Erie, we find a few small ones, especially in the Genessee country; but they are rare and inconsiderable until we reach the mouth of Cataragus creek, a tributary of Lake Erie, in the State of New York, where, according to Governor Clinton, (*Memoir, &c.*) a line of forts, or military stations commences, extending southward for more than fifty miles, with intervals of not more than five miles. There is said to be another line, parallel to this, whose inclosures contain but a few acres of ground each surrounded by low earthen parapets.

Upon the south-west of these works, like remains are common, but possess no additional interest until we arrive on the Licking creek, near Newark, Ohio, where are some of the most extensive and intricate on the continent. At Circleville, there are yet large and important remains, but others, which once existed at Chillicothe, are almost effaced by time. On Paint creek, are probably the vestiges of an ancient city, which richly merit examination and study. At the mouth of the Scioto,

and Muskingum rivers are others, also, of the greatest interest. The works at, and south of, Newark, are all of them large, varying from twenty, to several hundred acres.

Similar remains are thickly scattered over the vast plain, from Lake Erie to the Mexican gulph, increasing in *number, size, and grandeur*, as we progress to the South. They may be traced around the gulph, across the province of Texas, into New Mexico; and thence along the Cordillera to South America. They abound most, in the vicinity of good streams, and are rarely discovered, in the prairies or barrens. On the Ohio, *mounds* appear on both sides, erected uniformly on the highest alluvions. Speaking of these, Mr. Breckenridge, who has had frequent opportunities to observe them, remarks, "that these tumuli as well as the fortifications, are to be found at the junction of all the rivers along the Mississippi, in the most eligible positions for towns, and in the most extensive bodies of fertile land. Their number exceeds, perhaps, three thousand, the smallest not less than twenty feet in height and one hundred in diameter at the base. Their great number, and the astonishing size of some of them, may be regarded as furnishing with other circumstances, evidences of their antiquity. I have been sometimes induced to think, that at the period when these were constructed, there was a population as numerous, as that which once animated the borders of the Nile, the Euphrates, or the vale of Mexico. The most numerous, as well as the most considerable of these remains, are found precisely in those parts of the country where the traces of a numerous population might be looked for, viz. from the mouth of the Ohio, on the east side of the river, to the Illinois river, and on the west side, from the Saint Francis to the Missouri. I am perfectly satisfied that cities similar to those of ancient Mexico, of several hundred thousand souls, have existed here."

Nearly opposite to Saint Louis, there are said to be traces of two such cities in the distance of five miles.

The skeletons found in the mounds, differed much from the forms of our present Indians. The latter are a tall, slender, and straight limbed people, the former were short and thick, rarely above five feet high, and few indeed were six. Their foreheads were low, cheek bones rather high, their faces very short and broad, their eyes very large, and their chins very little. This description is given by Mr. Atwater in his memoir on Indian antiquities, with several skulls taken from ancient tumuli, before him.

In these tumuli, there have been found some interesting vestiges of the arts of the people who constructed them. Statues and urns of clay ingeniously formed, cloth of coarse texture, made probably from ligneous fibres; gold, silver, and copper ornaments curiously wrought; and weapons of *iron*, which have been found no where else we believe, among the people of America, before brought hither by Europeans; all proclaim a

state of civilization, considerably advanced. The discovery of the qualities of iron, and the mode of making it, must have led the inventors rapidly onward, had not some extraordinary, and perhaps undiscoverable cause, dispersed or destroyed them.

In the course of our work, we shall enter minutely into an investigation of these subjects, much we are sure to our own gratification and that of our readers.

### NOTE B.

Don Antonio de Leon y Gama, a native of Mexico, whose knowledge of astronomy is commended by M. de Humboldt, published at Mexico in 1792, "*An historical and chronological description of two stones, which were found in 1790, in repairing the principal square of Mexico; explaining the system of the Indian calendar, the method adopted therein for the division of time, and regulation of the civil with the tropical solar year.*" 117 pp. quarto. The same writer, before his death, prepared a larger and more important treatise, on the Toltec and Aztec chronology, which has not yet, we believe, been published. His views of the Mexican calendar, more extensive than those in the text, differ in no essential particular from them, except, in the period at which the year commenced, and in the important fact, that the first day, whatever be the sign of the year, is always presided by *Cipactli*, a sign corresponding to the Capricorn of the Greek sphere. Admitting that much confusion exists, relative to the names of the months, and to the month which commences the year, he contends that, that month was *Tititl*, whose first day, corresponded with our 9th of January. For this position, he relies upon the Indian historian, Chistoval del Castillo, and upon other apparently respectable authorities. M. de Humboldt, who carefully studied the Mexican chronology, has also adopted this month as the first of the year. (*Researches*, &c. Vol. I.)

The abbé Clavigero, in the appendix to the first volume of his history, has given a table, showing the correspondence of the days of the Mexican months, with the Gregorian calendar, in which the first month is stated to be *Cipactli*, and the first day to be equivalent to the 26th of our February, which is the form of the calendar I had adopted in the text, before I obtained the "*Descripción*" of M. de Gama. M. de Gama, also, gives a table, more comprehensive than that of Clavigero, exhibiting a like correspondence, with the agreement between the Mexican months, the periods of thirteen days, and the "Companions of the days, or the lords of the night." Both tables include the days of a whole year. But as this extension is not indispensable to the understanding of the subject, we have copied here a table framed by M. de Humboldt, which includes only the first thirty-one days of the Mexican year, but which shows also the Mexican months divided into periods of five days.

TABLE.

MEZTLAPOHUITL, RITUAL AND ASTROLOGICAL CALENDAR.				TOMALPOHUITL, CIVIL CALENDAR.		Correspondence with the Gregorian Calendar, For the Year 1001.	
Periods of 13 Days.	Series of the 13 Numbers.	SERIES of the 20 Signs of the Days.	SERIES of the 9 Lords of the Night.	Mexican Months divided into periods of 5 days.			
FIRST HALF-LUNA- TION.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Cipactli	Trecatl	1	2	3	4
		Ehecatl	Tecpatl	2	3	4	5
		Calli	Xochitl	3	4	5	6
		Cuizapalhu	Cinteotl	4	5	6	7
		Cohuatl	Miquiztli	5	6	7	8
		Miquiztli	Atl	6	7	8	9
		Mizauil	Tlazoteotl	7	8	9	10
		Tochtli	Tepcyolloctli	8	9	10	11
		Atl	Quahuitl	9	10	11	12
		Itzcutli	Tlecil	10	11	12	1
		Ozomatli	Tecpatl	11	12	1	2
		Mallinalli	Xochitl	12	1	2	3
		Acatli	Cinteotl	13	2	3	4
SECOND HALF-LUNA- TION.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Ocrotli	Miquiztli	14	15	16	17
		Quahuitl	Atl	15	16	17	18
		Cozacauauhtli	Tlazoteotl	16	17	18	19
		Olin	Tepcyolloctli	17	18	19	20
		Tecpatl	Quahuitl	18	19	20	21
		Quahuitl	Tlecil	19	20	21	22
		Xochitl	Tecpatl	20	21	22	23
		Cipactli	Xochitl	21	22	23	24
		Ehecatl	Cinteotl	22	23	24	25
		Calli	Miquiztli	23	24	25	26
		Quezpalhu	Atl	24	25	26	27
		Cohuatl	Tlazoteotl	25	26	27	28
		Miquiztli	Tepcyolloctli	26	27	28	29
{	1 2 3 4 5	Mizauil	Quahuitl	27	28	29	30
		Tochtli	Tlecil	28	29	30	31
		Atl	Tecpatl	29	30	31	
		Itzcutli	Xochitl	30			
		Ozomatli	Cinteotl	31			

Having formed this table, M. de Humboldt takes occasion to observe, that the Indians of Chiapa, employing the same divisions of time, and the same contrivance of the periodical series, gave the hieroglyphics of the days contained in a month, the name of twenty illustrious warriors, who in the remotest times, had conducted the first colonists to the mountains of Teochiapán. Among these signs of the days, (*Kárkunán* of the Persians,) the Chiapanese distinguished, like the Aztecks, four great, and sixteen less signs. The first began the periods of five days; but for the names of House, Rabbit, Cane, and Flint, (*ealli*, *tochtli*, *acatl*, and *tepatl*,) they substituted those of *Votan*, *Lambat*, *Been*, and *Chinax*, chiefs celebrated in their history.

"We have already," he continues, "fixed the attention of our readers on this *Votan* or *Wodan*, an American, who seems to have been a member of the family of the *Wods*; or *Odins*, of the Goths, and nations of Celtic origin. As Odin, and Boudha, according to Sir William Jones, are names for the same person, it is curious to see *Boudvar*, *Wodans-dag*, (Wednesday,) and *Votan*, denote in India, in Scandinavia, and Mexico, a day of a small period of time. According to the ancient traditions collected by De la Vega, the *Wodan* of the Chiapanese, was grandson of him, who with his family was saved on a raft from the general deluge. Wodan co-operated in the construction of the great edifice which was reared by the human race with the design of reaching the skies, and which was defeated by the confusion of tongues. At this period Teotl, ordered Wodan to people the country of Anahuac. This tradition reminds us of the *Menou* of the Hindoos, the Noah of the Hebrews, and the dispersion of the Cushites of Shinar. Comparing it with those of the Hebrews and Indians, preserved in Genesis and the two sacred Pourannas, or with the fable of Xelhua, the Cholutain we are struck with the analogy existing between the ancient memorials of the people of Asia, and those of the new continent."

This analogy, M. de Humboldt conceives is particularly manifest in the division of time, in the use of periodical series, and in the ingenious, though complex method of denoting a day and a year, not by cyphers, but by astrological signs. The nations of Anahuac reckoned by cycles of fifty-two years, divided into four epochs of thirteen years. The Chinese, Japanese, Calmucks, Moghols, Mantchous, and other Tartar hordes, have cycles of sixty years, divided into periods of twelve years. The nations of Asia, as of America, have names for the years of each cycle; and it is still said at Lassa, and at Nangasacki, as formerly in Mexico, that an event happened in the year of the *Rabbit*, the *Tiger*, or the *Dog*. None of these nations has as many names as there are years in the cycle; all consequently have recurred to the contrivance of the correspondence of periodical series. Among the Mexicans, these series are of thirteen numbers, and four hieroglyphical signs; among the nations



of Asia, above named, the series do not contain numbers, but are formed of signs, solely, corresponding to the twelve constellations of the zodiac and the names of the elements, which afford ten terms; each element having a male and female representation.

M. de Humboldt has compared at some length, these Asiatic and American systems for computing time; and he arrives at the conclusion, that it is singularly probable, that the zodiacs of the Toltecs, the Aztecs, the Mongols, and the Thibetans, and many other nations, now separated by a vast extent of country, originated on the same point of the ancient (Asiatic) continent.

Of the stones mentioned in the title page of M. de Gama's work, one was the compound statue of the goddess *Teoyaomiqui* and *Huitzilopochtli*, which I have noticed in the text, and the other the Mexican calendar, in bas relief, an engraving of which is given by M. de Gama, and by M. de Humboldt, in his *Researches*, &c. Vol. 1.

The stone was nearly fourteen feet square, and forty inches thick, but the circle surrounding the sculpture is somewhat less than ten feet in diameter. It is according to M. de Humboldt, a blackish grey trappean porphyry, with bases of basaltic *wakke*, containing detached fragments of hornblende, some slender crystals of vitreous feldspar, with some sprinklings of mica; and weighs more than twenty-four tons. The sculpture upon it, is as well polished as any other of the Mexican carvings; and the concentric circles, and the divisions and sub-divisions, are traced with mathematical precision.

It is a monument which contains the periods of a great part of the Mexican festivals, and served to indicate precisely the seasons for their proper celebration, with the course of the sun, during the two hundred and sixty days of the lunar year, the interval between the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. It was also used as a sun dial, by which the priests daily ascertained the hour of their several ceremonies and sacrifices, by means of gnomes placed in certain holes of the stone.

Its figure was originally, a rectangular paralleliped, and it is inferred from the position of the *almanac*, being near one end, that a corresponding stone existed, designating the sun's course, and the religious *fasti* for the remainder of the year. Upon the narrow side, or edge of the stone, was engraven a very beautiful vignette, of *Arabesque*.















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